3 November 1978 30p USA & Canada $1 By Air

NEW STATESMAN

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Final souvenir issue November 30 1978

THE TIMES

Lord Chalfont: How the Shah could save The Times

Inside story of the Battle of Printing House Square

Diligent investigation reveals no trace of a plan on the part of the management of The Times and the Sunday Times

Ignorant armies alleged to clash by night

This type is thought to be considerably larger than that used in some of the agreements that The Times unions are being asked to sign. Magnifying glasses are

Mr 'Duke' Hussey to receive Nobel Peace Prize

Roy Thomson found revolving in his grave

The West Bank and Camp David

No doubt it was just a trivial coincidence, one of history's bad jokes. But the news that Menachem Begin, along with Anwar Sadat, has been awarded the Nobel peace prize came at precisely the moment when it appeared that Mr Begin was jeopardising both the hopes of an agreement with Egypt, and the possibility of bearable relations between Israel and the Palestinians, by insisting that Israel will go on building settlements on the West Bank. We have been criticised by many of our readers for not joining more wholeheartedly in the chorus of rapture after the signing of the Camp David agreements. The time has come to assess soberly how far those agreements really represent a victory for peace.

It can be argued, and it has been argued vigorously in Washington and elsewhere, that even if in the end only one of the twin Camp David agreements stands up, great progress will still have been made. Even if it is not yet possible – this argument runs – to define a status for the West Bank that will meet both the Palestinians' aspirations and the concerns of Israeli security, it would still be a great achievement to conclude a treaty between Israel and Egypt. That would take out of the ranks of Israel's enemies the only power capable of waging war against Israel successfully. Once that is achieved, then gradually it may be possible to address the Palestinian problem.

It is obviously too early to say with certainty that Mr Begin's intransigence has terminally damaged the prospects of a limited peace between Israel and Egypt. But the prognosis is now not good. For one thing, though the ostensible reasons for Israel's withdrawal from the Blair House talks were different and rather trivial ones, the real difficulty seems to have been Egyptian insistence that the two agreements were indeed linked. And that technical diplomatic question reflects a larger reality. While American diplomacy, and Anwar Sadat's pragmatism and desire for peace, may have diverted Egypt from the leadership of the Arabs against Israel, no Egyptian leader can safely be seen to betray or abandon the Palestinians.

It will therefore be hard for President Sadat to swallow the Israeli decision to go on building settlements. It will be harder still for the rest of the Arab world to swallow it. There are already signs that the Camp David agreement, and Mr Begin's interpretation of it, are beginning to forge a new alliance between former arch-enemies in Damascus and Baghdad. For the time being, Washington brushes that danger aside. But it should not be forgotten that the starting-point of the strategy that led to Camp David was the American decision to exclude the Soviet Union from a Middle East settlement. The collapse of the Camp David agreements, or the enforcement of an interpretation of them too unfavourable either to Egypt or to the Palestinians, would hand the Soviet Union an easy opportunity to get back into the game.

In the past, there has been a depressing tendency for hurried 'settlements' in the area to bring the next war fractionally closer. Those who are excluded from the making of the agreement may not object if the agreement itself holds some good news for them. But there is small incentive for the uninvited to respect a deal which leaves them where they were before.

An even more ominous danger looms in the background. The United States remains heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil. Congress's handling of the President's timid energy bills does not suggest that its dependence will disappear very soon. And in the meantime the United States has become heavily committed to the survival of at least five Middle Eastern regimes: those in Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The combination of economic dependence and political involvement is a vulnerable one. That is why it will be so dangerous if President Carter does not insist that the Camp David agreements are honoured in full.

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Notes on Politics and Power

'Proper pressure' on Sam Silkin

Our correspondent writes: The waiving of the Section One charges in the Official Secrets trial at the Old Bailey was not, as most reports have suggested, an act of natural generosity by Sam Silkin but simply the grudging reaction of a man with a gun at his head. Silkin was reluctant to admit effectively that the Section One charges should never have been brought, and that he had been responsible for the waste of further hefty sums of public money, since this would make him seem even more foolish than he already appeared. However, in the late afternoon of Monday 23 October Mr Justice Mars-Jones told John Leonard QC, the prosecuting counsel: 'The Attorney-General has the power to start a prosecution. He also has the power to stop it.'

In the face of this broadest of judical hints, and in view of the fact that throughout the preceding legal arguments the judge had made it quite clear that he thought the Section One charges 'very oppressive', Leonard hurriedly consulted with the Attorney-General overnight. With great reluctance, but in the face of overwhelming odds, Silkin caved in.

The trial is now progressing in pedestrian fashion towards its probable conclusion next week, with Duncan Campbell (of the NEW STATESMAN) in the witness box explaining references in the sheaves of notes and documents belonging to him which have been exhibited at the trial. 'At the bottom of this page,' said Campbell's QC, Lord Hutchinson, on Monday, 'there seems to be the word "bullshit".' Campbell confirmed that this was indeed so, and apologised for his 'atrocious' handwriting. 'And on this page,' drones Lord Hutchinson, 'you mention Gough Whitlam. Now who might he be?' And so the wheels of justice grind on. The most entertaining fact to emerge from Campbell's evidence, but one which somehow escaped the notice of the press, was that Campbell's mother used to work for the Government Code and Cipher School (GCCS), which eventually became the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ), the home of Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) – which is at the centre of the case against her son.

Uncle Sam in San Juan

Michael Leapman writes from San Juan: Because it is conducted for the most part with only token violence, the campaign for independence for Puerto Rico gets less extensive notice in the American press than the more spectacular struggles in Southern Africa and Northern Ireland. Yet now that the Cubans have persuaded the United Nations Committee of 24 to call for Puerto Rican self-determination, we shall hear more of it.

America's assertion that it is an internal matter, nothing to do with the UN, is patently fraudulent. Puerto Rico, despite the fact that its people have full American citizenship, is not a state of the USA and is unlikely to become one in the near future. The islanders themselves may be increasingly in favour of statehood but the Americans are probably not as ready to grant it as its advocates would like to believe. Any government would be wary of incorporating a territory which could turn out to be every bit as disconcerting for them as Northern Ireland is for Britain. It is true that parties supporting independence attract few votes in elections. The leaders of those parties maintain that this is because, for the 80 years during which the Americans have controlled the place, they have so structured the economy that it depends heavily on the US link. Supporters of independence also say that they are harrassed and discouraged by the authorities.

Nationalists both in Puerto Rico and on the American mainland keep people's minds on the subject by planting bombs in symbolic locations, mainly the offices of the multinational corporations whose presence on the island is so overpowering. On the eve of the 4th July holiday this year, independence supporters held three men hostage in the Chilean consulate for a day and a night. Alan Randall, an American labour lawyer, was assassinated last year by the 'Commando Squad of the Working Class', who claimed that he was working for the CIA to subvert Puerto Rican organised labour. A few weeks after his death the body of a Teamsters' Union organiser was found in a rain forest. He had been strangled. His friends suggest that he was killed by police, who suspected him of complicity in Randall's murder. Police say he was killed by other Teamster members so that he would not talk. Carlos Enrique Soto and Arnaldo Dario Rosado, two young independence supporters, were shot this summer by the police, who claimed they were planning to blow up communications systems on the south of the island to commemorate the anniversary of the first landing of American troops in 1898. It has not been established, however, that they carried explosives suitable for that purpose. The governor has refused to mount an impartial investigation and relatives of the dead men have not been allowed to see the notes of inquiries undertaken by the state.

Puerto Rico shows more of the symptoms of classic colonial exploitation than the supporters of continuing the U.S. link would like us to believe. They even include the use of one of its offshore islands, Vieques, for sustained bombing practice by the U.S. Navy. Puerto Ricans do get solid benefits from the relationship, mainly in terms of money for development and welfare payments. (Some 70 per cent of families there receive U.S. food stamps.) Independence advocates point out that these come to about the same amount of money as American companies take out in the form of untaxed or low-taxed profits. The owners of these companies want to see the present Commonwealth relationship continue, for statehood would mean that they would ultimately have to pay the same taxes as the rest of the United States.

The other vaunted benefit is the right to live and work on the mainland. There are 3,300,000 Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico and nearly two million in the United States where, again in the classic colonial pattern, they live for the most part in the decaying areas of the older cities, doing low-grade jobs. The effect of all this on the island's self-respect is shown by unusually high rates of crime, alcoholism and drug abuse. A territory which has to export a third of its population to stay viable is not, when you come down to it, much of an advertisement for American enlightenment and generosity.

The privacy of Britain's computers

James Michael writes: The report of the Data Protection Committee (set up in 1976 to make recommendations on computers and privacy) has not yet been published, but great chunks of it have just been leaked. It is not likely to satisfy the National Council for Civil Liberties and others who want strict controls over the electronic and paper dossiers kept on us all.

The report, which has been with the Home Secretary since last summer, is essentially moderate and flexible. It stops short of saying that there should be a general right for 'data subjects', as we are to be known, actually to see what the electronic Big Brothers know about us. And it leaves a great deal up to the discretion of a new Data Protection Authority, both in drafting the Codes of Practice to govern computer uses and in their enforcement.

It does propose a new legal regime for all (well, nearly all) of those who use computers to store information about people. The basic scheme is for such systems to be registered with the Authority. Exemptions from registration for government bodies authorised by the Home Secretary are to be 'precisely limited to national security'. Commercial systems may be exempted by the Authority if their registration would not be considered 'necessary or helpful'.

The registered computer systems are to be subject to a variety of Codes of Practice, which would be approved by Parliament and have the force of law. These might or might not require that individuals should actually be able to see what is held on them. Although the Committee recommends that people should know what information about them is stored and be able to see that it is not misused, the methods of carrying out these principles are to be left to the Codes of Practice.

This falls short of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, which gives people the right to see and correct information in the files held on them by credit reference agencies. And it avoids the similar general 'subject access' right which is at the core of recent legislation in other countries aimed at protecting personal privacy.

The Committee also would leave nearly all of the Act's enforcement up to the Authority rather than providing for private prosecutions. The Authority, having drafted the Codes and seen to the users' registrations, will also see to prosecutions. Individuals would only be able to bring civil actions for 'ascertainable damage' from a breach of a Code.

While we would be able to find out from the public list which computer users have registered we would not necessarily be able to see what, if anything, the computer has on us. Most of us, most of the time, would be forced to trust the Authority, which should 'avoid an adversary relationship' with computer users.

NEW STATESMAN

Vol 96 No 2485

Published weekly at Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ Tel: 01-405 8471
© 1978 The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd.

Annual Subscription Rates

By surface mail	UK £14.50. Overseas £16, USA $34, Canada $37.
By air mail	Europe £19.50, Middle East £21, Africa, India, W. Indies £22, USA $44, Canada $47, Australia, NZ, Far East £23.

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Wandsworth cuts again

Anna Coote writes: The future of neighbourhood law centres under Tory rule looks very bleak indeed, if developments this week in the London borough of Wandsworth are anything to go by. The Tories who took over Wandsworth in the local elections last May pledged immediately to 'review' their support for the borough's three law centres in Balham, Battersea and Garrett Lane. However, the relevant unions and management committees have forced them to spend time negotiating terms of reference and the review has not yet begun.

The Tories are impatient to find ways of making the massive expenditure cuts which will be necessary if they are to fulfil their pledge to hold down rates next year. So in order to speed things up, the Council's Public Accountability Sub-Committee considered on Tuesday a report on law centre funding, which has been specially commissioned from the borough's Finance Department. The report claims that ten per cent of Britain's law centres are situated in Wandsworth and that these cost £224,000, almost twice as much as the amount spent by any other London borough. Both points are bound to fuel the Tories' case for cutting the Council's grant to the centres, but both are seriously misleading.

Though it is true that earlier this year there was a total of thirty law centres in the country, there are plenty more in the pipeline. By the end of next year there will be as many as 50, which will significantly reduce the percentage concentrated in Wandsworth. The adjacent borough of Lambeth, still controlled by Labour, has plans to set up four new law centres.

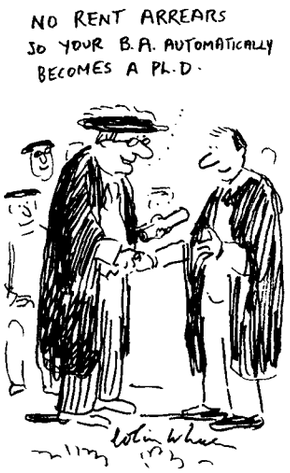
The report does not say that the figure of £224,000 includes an urban aid grant to the Garratt Lane centre, which brings the Council's own contribution down to £168,022, not far in advance of the London borough of Camden, which last year spent £120,000 on law centres.

It is widely expected that at the November meeting of Wandsworth Council's Finance Committee an immediate cut will be recommended – probably of two-thirds of the current grant. If this goes through, two centres will have to close. All three have built up extremely busy practices, providing local people with free legal help which cannot easily be obtained from other courses – including assistance to battered women and to tenants facing eviction. There is no question of their work being superfluous to the community's needs, or of the one remaining centre being able to take over the case load of the other two. And for all that, the impact of the cut on next year's rates bill will be negligible.

Hailsham and Brunel

Francis Wheen writes: In July 1977 Christopher Drummond, a student at Brunel University, passed all the exams necessary to qualify as a Bachelor of Technology. The university however have refused to confer the degree, as Mr Drummond has paid only part of his residence fee for the year, claiming that the university accommodation in which he had been living was sub-standard.

The university's action is based on Senate Ordinance 11 which states that 'no degree shall be awarded to a student who is in debt to the university', but since the rest of this ordinance deals exclusively with *tuition* fees (and since, in any case the Senate is bound by its charter to restrict itself to academic matters) the use of this ordinance to victimise a student for unpaid *residence* fees appears dubious in the extreme. The university is free, in any case, to pursue its claim for rent arrears through the county courts.



When the university refused to treat the rent arrears and the degree conferment as separate issues, the students' union was left with no alternative but to petition the university's visitor, thereby plunging itself back into the seventeenth century. The extraordinarily wide powers and duties of visitors were settled by the judgment of Sir John Holt in *Philips v Bury* (1692): 'The office visitor by the common law is to judge according to the statutes of the college, and to expel and deprive upon just occasions, and to hear appeals of course. And from him, and him only, the party grieved ought to have redress; and in him the founder hath reposed so entire confidence that he will administer justice impartially, that his determinations are final, *and examinable in no other court whatsoever.*' (My italics.)

Of late, the university visitor's exclusive jurisdiction over internal disputes has often been forgotten and courts have intervened in matters legally beyond their scope (as in *R. v Aston University Senate*, 1969). However in May this year an important but little-noticed High Court judgment confirmed the pre-eminence of the ancient law when Sir Robert Megarry commended the visitor as 'an appropriate domestic tribunal which can determine the matter informally, privately, cheaply and speedily and give a decision which . . . is final and will not be disturbed by the courts'.

Lord Hailsham spent last Friday at Brunel, hearing submissions from the university and the students' union (despite objections from the university that the students' union had no *locus standi* before the visitor and despite the university's apparent unhappiness at Hailsham's power to meddle in internal affairs and, if he so decides, to overturn a Senate ordinance). Although Hailsham gave no clue about which way his judgment would go, it is believed that he did agree that there should be internal procedures for settling disputes of this kind which would ensure a fair hearing for students without calling in the visitor.

Free Speech

Neutron Madness

Earlier this year, it looked as if opposition from European governments and some NATO commanders had halted the construction and deployment of the 'neutron bomb'; that combination of 'enhanced radiation' and thermonuclear energy which some believe will deter the Red Army and its tanks. Jimmy Carter took the decision to 'postpone' deployment of the weapon, but this week it begins to look as if, like the Kaiser's 1914 railway timetable, the American arms lobby has a momentum of its own. Carter has now taken the decision in principle to build the bomb, so his reluctance to commit himself on deployment is otiose. Once the damn thing is built, it will be deployed as sure as night follows day (to use that overworked expression in the right context for once).

It is, as usual, difficult to oppose any new step in the arms race without being accused of sympathy for the Warsaw Pact, sneaking admiration for the Red Army or just plain bleeding-heart reluctance to face *hard facts*. The *Dallas Morning News* hit top register last week when it shrieked:

> Quite understandably, the Soviet propaganda industry launched a world-wide campaign to portray this as an unthinkable weapon, too terrible to contemplate, let alone build. Not so understandable, but at least predictable, was the next step: Leftist spokesmen around the world trooped right along with this Soviet lead, wagging their tails behind them.

Versions of the same pellucid reasoning have appeared elsewhere. How odd, then, that individuals and parties as disparate as Lord Chalfont and the Dutch Christian Democrats have declared themselves against the neutron bomb and the Strangelove logic which sustains it. For some reason, political parties and governments in Western and Central Europe are not as keen as the American military-intellectual complex to have such risky weapons based on their soil. Because, you see, the thing about the neutron bomb which makes it worse than other nuclear bombs is that it is a bomb designed to be *used*.

All the other arguments, which are of the dangerously casual form 'what difference does one more make?', fall by virtue of ignoring this fact. The neutron bomb lowers the threshold at which a nuclear exchange could be expected to begin. That, and not its allegedly immoral habit of killing people and sparing property, is its real menace. As Paul Warnke put it (he is now the director of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) in 1975:

> New weapons with a lower yield and greater accuracy and presumably few collateral consequences would erode rather than strengthen deterrence, and could at worst increase the prospect of eventual nuclear war.

As Tim Shawcross pointed out (NS 20 October) the missile men are the real destabilisers.

So now we are back on the treadmill again. The American administration has conducted a travesty of the 'consultation' it promised its European allies, the patient and cynical hawks in the arms business and the Defence Department have managed to shirk a full debate in Congress; The President has caved in to the 'clean bomb' nutcases who will not rest until Europe has been destroyed in order to save it.

Christopher Hitchens

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Christopher Hird and Patrick Wintour: the state of The Times

Armageddon at Printing House Square

THE ODDS JUST NOW are that there will be no copies of *The Times* or the *Sunday Times* by the end of this month. The decision to suspend publication of these papers and their associated educational and literary supplements is the result of various industrial relations problems at Times Newspapers Ltd (TNL), which is part of the Thomson Organisation.

One might imagine such a decision being preceded by months of detailed planning. Many observers, especially among TNL's employees, perceive a cunning, calculated move on the part of a oil-rich Canadian-based conglomerate, anxious to divest itself of ancient British institutions acquired in sentimentality by its founder, the late Roy Thomson. This interpretation, however, seems mistaken. All the evidence suggests that the episode is no more than a highly-complex bungle, brought about by a fortuitous conjunction of developments – some new, some which have been around, in essence at least, for many years.

In April this year Mr M. I. ('Duke') Hussey, chairman of TNL, wrote to all the company's employees, saying that they would be sacked on November 30 – and the papers would cease publication – unless their unions agreed to voluntary redundancies, a new disputes procedure, and guarantees about continuity of production. Closure, in theory at least, would be temporary. But a fresh start would depend on management terms being met. The Thomson board, although they had of course discussed the closure option, did not discover much, if at all, before their humbler employees that 'Duke' had decided to go into action and 'concentrate the unions' minds'. They express, when asked, great confidence in the proceedings – but rather in the tone Maneppa might have used if asked to give some idea of his ultimate destination.

Among the pressures which have brought two famous and irreplaceable newspapers into deadly crisis are: the recent enrichment of the Thomson group by its North Sea oil interests; the Thomson family's decision to give up financial responsibility for *The Times*; the frustration of TNL's management at the unending nature of its battles with the unions; the technical failure of the company's attempts to get its new-technology systems going; and the curiously off-hand attitude that the board of the Thomson Organisation has tended to take about the operations of its two most famous products.

THE THOMSON ORGANISATION is today a rich and successful company. Although it has profitable interests in regional newspapers, publishing and travel, the major source of its wealth is oil. This year almost three-quarters of its £126 million of profits will be made from North Sea oil, which five years ago hardly existed. At the beginning of the decade the Thomson Organisation was so small and weak that Lord Thomson – who owned most of the shares – had to promise to meet any of the losses of *The Times*.

*Top: editors William Rees-Mogg (*The Times*) and Harold Evans (*Sunday Times*). Below: managers Dugal Nisbet-Smith (left) and 'Duke' Hussey (right).*

When he died in 1976 his son took over a responsibility, which has not proved too onerous in the last five years: losses, after tax relief, of £1.8m have been well covered by over £8m of dividends which the Thomson family have received from their investment in the Thomson Organisation. Under the terms of the agreement financial responsibility for *The Times* could revert to the Thomson Organisation on either side giving six months notice. But last year the notice period was cut to a month, on the initiative of the Thomson family. Earlier this year, after Mr Hussey's threat to close the *Times* newspapers, financial responsibility for the paper reverted to the Thomson Organisation. This was done to kill off any ideas on the unions' part that a 'blank cheque' might be available to keep TNL going.

In so far as such an idea exists, it will have been encouraged by the distinctly non-commercial attitude that the Thomson Organisation takes to *The Times* and the *Sunday Times*. They do not expect it, even if 'reformed', to make anything like the 10 per cent profit on turnover, which many newspaper proprietors consider only adequate. The papers have been seen very much as the prestigious flagship of the group. TNL has been allowed to operate with a great deal of autonomy, reinforced by the presence of a main board, richly populated with non-executive dignitaries.

However, the Thomson board has never been so easy-going as to suggest that TNL could remain in a permanent state of loss – and, with the passage of years, this unhappy prospect has sometimes seemed like the only one on offer. Over the last few years, rather vague talk about 'standing up to the unions' has gradually hardened into a real option: last summer Mr Gordon Brunton, Thomson's chief executive, told a group of mid-ranking managers from several parts of the group that a six-month closure of the *Times* papers was quite possible in 1978 or 79. This was an address given from notes: but Mr Brunton makes no secret of the fact that such ideas had been around a good deal earlier.

For years TNL management have become increasingly frustrated with some of the trades unions in their company. As they see it, a combination of overstaffing, restrictive practices, continual disruption and a lack of proper control by national union leaders has made it impossible to manage the newspapers properly.

These are the familiar cries of Fleet Street managements. Production conditions have always given a strong bargaining position to print workers: tight production schedules, the anxiety of newspaper proprietors to meet them, and their concern with nothing other than their papers' circulation, have all played a part. As a result, there are many working – or indeed, non-working – practices unknown elsewhere in industry. In some departments, for instance, the union acts as the employer of staff; frequently, managements claim, they have to make on-the-spot payments to get the paper out and get it delivered. TNL claims that the current argument is about such issues – about the right to manage the company and, the right to seek for fewer and simpler, agreements to assist the process.

BUT THIS IS NOT all that is an only problem, to the collective mind of TNL. Three years ago the company decided to introduce new, computer-based technology to produce the papers. This has proved costlier than expected, and radically less efficient.

TNL first became seriously interested in the new printing techniques in 1973. Five companies competed for the contract – Harris Intertype, MGD (a subsidiary of Rockwell International), Linotype-Paul, ICL and Systems Development Corporation of Santa Monica California. Of the two foreigners, SDC's skills lay in computerising accounts and advertising, while Harris had produced better systems for journalistic production. TNL decided to extract the most attractive aspects from *each* of the companies' submissions. According to one of the experts involved in offering the contract: 'Each of the companies then gave a day's seminar. It was the test of the best salesman, in other words, who was the biggest romancer.' Chuck Hunter of SDC breezily replied to any inquiry of the capabilities of the SDC programme with: 'yup, no problem'. SDC were eager to secure a foothold in Fleet Street. It led them to promise the earth, and at a cheaper price than their competitors. They won the contract.

In May 1976 TNL produced a booklet

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entitled *Opportunity for Success* which contained a section on the new technology. SDC, it said, 'was first brought to TNL's attention by Lord Thomson and his son Kenneth who had been impressed by its performance in providing an advertisement and a production system for one of the group's papers just outside Los Angeles'. It added that TNL's system 'could go live at the end of January 1977 and that is what is planned'. Virtually two years behind schedule, the final system *should* be ready for installation at the end of November; according to one computer expert, 'SDC's problems will only begin from then on'.

There have been some problems with the system's machinery – the Hewlett-Packard computers became obsolete alarmingly fast. But the basic hardware has long been installed on the third floor at Gray's Inn Road, where the *Sunday Times* has its offices alongside *The Times*' New Printing House Square. The real delays have been caused by SDC's inability to come up with the requisite software – the computer programming that will make the system work. Harold Evans, the editor of the *Sunday Times*, gave a rather unfortunate morale-boosting address to the *Sunday Times* editorial team two weeks ago – shortly before departing for America, where he has lately spent a good deal of time working on the Henry Kissinger memoirs project – and he said:

> Two years ago I told you I have seen the future of Fleet Street and it works. I now have to tell you that it doesn't.

There is no doubt that the numerous delays and uncertainties over the progress of the computerised system have much exacerbated the tensions and anxieties of the manual unions at TNL. Not only have they been uncertain about *when* the system might actually begin: nobody, even now, is quite sure what sort of a system it will eventually be.

The original intention was to have a so-called 'journalistic front-end' system, in which editorial keyboards would be used to generate type-setting – without the intervention of printers. The advertising departments, also, would have direct access to typesetting from their own keyboards: they would be capable simultaneously of checking-out the creditworthiness of a potential client, typesetting his ad, and sending him his bill. (It is in this rationalisation of advertising procedures that the obvious profits are to be made.) The system was to be phased in, beginning with the classified ads in the supplements, and working towards the editorial in the main papers. It was, and is, a much more ambitious project than that adopted by, for instance, Mirror Newspapers: the 'electronic composing-room' method, in which type is still generated by a separate process involving an essentially traditional relationship with printers.

Considering that the *Sunday Times* is the largest print operation in Europe, that British papers tend to have exceptionally complex design and layout – and that any suitable new system was bound to offend many vested interests – it was obvious enough that the task of the software designers was going to be formidable. But it was cheerfully stated that with the abandonment of the Apollo moon programme, the computer brains were around, and that SDC were particularly ingenious.

By the middle of last year, TNL's co-ordinator of the computer development, Jonathan Carr, realised that SDC simply could not deliver. Other papers, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Baltimore Sun*, were also suffering at SDC's hands. In the summer, SDC produced a long list of items they had promised, but could not make. Top *Times* executives flew to Santa Monica in series: coming only to the dismaying conclusion that it was useless to sue SDC, because any more pressure might simply destroy the company's stability. Apart from anything else, many of the computer brains, whether ex-moonshooters or not, had simply moved on.

Following a rather brutal shake-up in their Newspaper Systems Division, SDC are promising all sorts of fixes. But large gaps remain. The machinery simply cannot produce accents, decorated borders, or elaborate logos for ads. It cannot mix classified and display ads on the same page. It has trouble accommodating vertical rules, much used in designing news-pages, and it is unable to identify which sub-editor or executive revised any particular piece of copy – a crippling deficiency in an organisation which has a large and elaborate hierarchy of sub-editors. At basic level, it seems that the system is inadequate at the task of distributing its central computer-power between the many input-points which have to come into use as deadlines approach in a big newspaper office. Internal enthusiasts still hope for the 'journalistic front end', but many others have come to the conclusion that the SDC system will never manage to handle the demands involved.

Looking for a way to new technology

Nor are these woes all. The firm that supplied the photo-typesetters in the system, MGD, have abandoned Britain leaving TNL with serious servicing problems. MGD promised to maintain servicing for five years; one of the photosetters was out of action for some weeks earlier this year. (Their ICL commercial computer has never been used due to union non-cooperation.)

As the crisis of the new technology reached its peak at the turn of the year, a crippling blow struck the company: Harvey Thompson, the general manager of TNL collapsed and died of a heart attack after yet another nerve racking session in Santa Monica. As Harold Evans succinctly put it during his abortive tonic for the troops last Friday.

> Harvey was a brilliant man, but unfortunately Harvey never wrote anything down. He kept everything in his head.

Soon after Thompson's demise, Sid Stevens, the expert who had put photo-processing in at Thomson's Regional Newspaper in Reading, left to join the *Observer* after a row with Hussey. Bereft now of any computer expertise, TNL called in management consultants Price Waterhouse. Since then TNL have been advertising unsuccessfully for systems coordinators.

The death of Harvey Thompson was one of four circumstances which combined to provoke the crisis now rather than at any other time. The other three were: failure of joint negotiations over new technology between the unions and the Newspaper Publishers Association, a rash of unofficial disputes and the inflow of the oil money.

Thomson Organisation's investment in North Sea oil is a stroke of amazing good luck; scarcely a result of corporate entrepreneurial flair. When, in 1971, the company had the chance to participate in a consortium bidding for licences to explore the North Sea, the company turned it down. Lord Thomson's family, however, agreed to put up the money themselves and to give the company an option to buy 90 per cent of the investment at cost. The investment has proved a tremendous success, but even as late as 1975 a big majority on the Thomson board wanted to ditch their oil interests. They did not manage to do so as Lord Thomson, with 80 per cent of the company, over-ruled them. It is lucky for the Thomson Organisation that he did: the profits from the North Sea are providing the wherewithal to pay for the changes they think necessary at TNL.

However, nothing like all the money will be invested in the UK. Monopolies legislation effectively prevents major expansion in publishing or travel and exchange control rules prevent Thomson investing the money abroad. To overcome this problem, in July a reorganisation of the complex Thomson empire was unveiled, in which the country of residence of the main company was effectively transferred to Canada, thus making it much easier for the North Sea oil profits to be paid there as dividends. As Lord Thomson told the Toronto Star

> 'I guess I am showing my bias. I think the North American market is the best in the world.'

The scheme had been in preparation for some time and last year the Thomson family spent £17m buying a Californian text-book publisher – which it intends to sell on to the new International Thomson Organisation.

The *Times*' hope for the mid-seventies rested on the idea that all the quality newspapers might be produced *together* through new technology. It remains a mystery why anyone thought this might work: when the idea collapsed, there followed joint talks between the print unions and the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. 'Duke' Hussey led for the proprietors, and Mr Bill Keys of SOGAT led for the unions. Their agreement the *Programme for Action* was published on November 1976. It proposed a model disputes procedure, improved pensions, compensation for redundancy and ways of dealing with decasualisation. It was rejected by all unions except the NUJ in a postal ballot. By the beginning of this year it was obvious there was no hope of getting an agreement other than on a company by company basis.

Also at the beginning of this year industrial relations in TNL were deteriorating fast. In the first three months of the year unofficial disputes had stopped the printing of *The Times* on 21 occasions and the *Sunday Times* on nine. Eleven million copies have been lost this year. Dugal

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Nisbet-Smith, the general manager of TNL who replaced Harvey Thompson, describes the situation as 'anarchy'. 'Over the years management has gone by the board. Man management has been taken over by the chapels. I am not blaming the unions in this respect, it is the fault of management,' he says.

The disruption was making advertisers restless and this as much as anything else stirred the Thomson Organisation board into action. Hussey was summoned and told to do something about the problem quickly. On 10 April he wrote to all the staff saying the situation was 'disturbing'. On 26 April he wrote to the general secretaries of the unions saying what he intended to do: he would suspend publication of the papers on 30 November unless the unions agreed to a new disputes procedure, no 'arbitary work restrictions', more efficient manning levels and a restructuring of the wage system. It was a massive and vague shopping list, which encompassed most of the long-standing problems facing the TNL management, including the introduction of new technology. In effect the unions were being asked to rewrite their rule books and, in some cases, destroy their own jobs.

Proposals put at the eleventh hour

It was a remarkable move. Although the oil riches have fallen into the Thomson Organisation's lap almost despite the board, at least for the last few years it was known they were coming. Chief Executive Brunton had made it clear the problems at TNL could be tackled by a temporary closure if necessary. This should have provided the opportunity for some careful planning and drafting of specific proposals to present to the unions. But there is no evidence that anything of the sort has gone on. Hussey seems to have jumped the gun and some of the Thomson board learnt of the closure date only by reading it in the newspapers. Hurriedly, TNL set up a New Agreements Project team to produce the new agreements covering the 54 chapels with which they negotiate.

Though Hussey threatened union members seven months ago with the sack it has only been in the last two weeks that chapel leaders have been presented with any details of what Hussey wanted. Even now many have no clear idea and await clarification. The crucial clerical staff chapel, for instance, only received the baldest outline a week ago with most of the essential figures left blank. They were told 15 detailed papers would be put forward this week. Barry Fitzpatrick, the Natsopa clerical workers' FOC, asked to see these papers prior to the scheduled meeting this Thursday so he could come with a considered response from his chapel but was told that was impossible. As a result the negotiations are delayed another week. Fitzpatrick says: 'the management give every impression of being bored by the negotiations and of not taking them seriously'.

The disparities in perception at TNL are startlingly wide: Fitzpatrick is represented by management as a demonic figure, utterly devoted to the overthrow of Times Newspapers, if not society at large. Outside observers find an ordinary, if militant unionist.

DUGAL NISBET-SMITH says that seven months warning was enough for the unions, although most of the chapels have not seen the management's extravagant proposals until the last fortnight. The delay is partly due to bureaucratic wrangles about the union level at which the plans should be discussed. Another stumbling block was the management's insistence that all union general secretaries attend. Since the NGA's official position was not to negotiate under the duress of threatened suspension it was impossible for the negotiations to progress. A further explanation for the lateness of the hour came from Harold Evans. The volume of legal and managerial work involved in redesigning the whole structure of the workforce has taken six months to finalise. All of which tends to support the view that 30 November was a date chosen almost at random. Overall, TNL want to shed 1,000 jobs in the next three years. All of these are formally intended to be voluntary redundancies. In some areas the management are attempting to ease people out through 'wage restructuring', in other words by cutting their wages so they are lower than elsewhere in Fleet Street. In other areas they plan to offer lump sums to entice people to leave.

The management are also asking all unions, except the NUJ, to agree that no one should be paid after a stoppage lasting more than 24 hours which is caused by any unofficial union disruption. The NUJ, for their part, have been offered a 'kitchen sink' agreement under which they must agree, in return for £500, to use any new technology thrust in front of them by the management. Finally, at Harold Evans's suggestion the management want to change the clause, long fought for by the *Sunday Times* NUJ, which strictly limits the frequency with which outside contributors can appear in the paper.

Generally, the NUJ's chapels, of the total of 54 in the building, have been most lightly hit. About 12 chapels are going to suffer badly, notably the Natsopa accounts department and the NGA linotype operators. The Natsopa machine assistants, where no new technology will be introduced, have been asked for redundancies amounting to over two fifths of the labour force.

Dealing with the individual chapels has been complicated by a clear split between them and the national leaders of the unions. Many members of the TNL management claim that the general secretaries of the unions are on their side and have the same interest in disciplining the rank and file members. But the management view that a few militants are acting against the wishes of the majority seems too simple. The relationship between the Natsopa officials and the fathers of *The Times*' chapels is particularly acrimonious. Early in 1977 Owen O'Brien, Natsopa general secretary, expelled 120 machine workers at *The Times* for defying a union instruction to return to work. Though they were eventually reinstated, the bitterness lingered on and six months later 500 delegates representing 8,000 Natsopa members condemned the behaviour of the machine branch secretary in supporting the role of the national officers. When O'Brien stood for re-election this summer he faced an unusual challenge from Barry Fitzpatrick of *The Times* and chairman of the union's London branch (normally re-election is a formality). Though O'Brien won by 17,000 votes to 10,000 the campaign was exceptionally vigorous. Allegations were made about the lack of financial rectitude of some Natsopa officials (subsequently Natsopa general council rejected their auditor's accounts and are awaiting the report of a further examination). O'Brien certainly cannot afford to ignore his 2,500 *Times* employees and at the least he must publicly support them.

However last week's meeting of the TUC print industry's committee was a bizarre spectacle. Faced by one of the worst Fleet Street crises since the war, this gathering of top general secretaries, chaired by Bill Keys of SOGAT, spent its time discussing the timing of the May Day holiday and the payment of SOGAT's health and safety co-ordinator.

Trench warfare with little objective

It is hard to find anyone – union officer, staff member or manager – who believes that an agreement can be reached between the chapels and TNL by the end of this month. If the paper closes the staff will receive their minimum legal entitlement to dismissal pay. In the case of the journalists, this will amount to four month's pay as the management have recently increased their length of notice. For other staff, it could be anything from two weeks pay upwards. A lengthy closure clearly means the loss of a lot of revenue (£600,000 is riding on each pre-Christmas colour magazine) and may, if prolonged, mean serious loss of staff. The TNL management have considered a variety of alternatives, including printing outside London and re-recruiting outside the union, but such plans will easily founder on any sympathetic industrial action taken by union members elsewhere in the Thomson Organisation.

They are also making fearsome noises to the unions. When *The Times* NUJ chapel asked Dugal Nisbet-Smith whether their house agreement would still apply if the paper was closed down, he replied: 'Do you mean would you be let back on the same terms? By God, if we have to close this paper, you will be coming back on our terms.'

If they mean any of this, Thomson are talking themselves into a period of prolonged trench warfare. The problem with such battles is that the cost can be immense and for that reason, lofty principles have to be found to fight over; the outcome can only be ignominious defeat for the side which gives up first. TNL did not start out in the spring with clear objectives. The proposals have been cobbled together with urgency yet the Thomson Organisation have very modest expectations of the profits they can make, from arguably two of the best properties in the newspaper world. None of this sounds like the beginnings of a secure, sensible future for *Times* newspapers.

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Oilgate notebook

During the next few months, while the establishment does its best to bury the oil-sanctions scandal under a snowdrift of quiet sophistries – so much better, don't you think, to consider the future rather than the past? – Martin Bailey, who broke the original story with Bernard Rivers, will write an occasional column in the NEW STATESMAN, *enabling people to keep up with the questions being asked, and the answers – if any – being given.*

The pitiless resolution of David Owen

■ Dr Owen's contribution to the Commons debate on Bingham is eagerly awaited. In his book on *The Politics of Defence* (1972) he pointed out that the biggest mistake over Rhodesian sanctions was 'never seriously to consider threatening a maritime blockade of any country which connived at sanctions-breaking'. An extension of the Beira Patrol to include South Africa, he wrote, would be 'a perfectly viable strategy provided that the international will exists among the major powers.' Where, I wonder, does Britain stand?

■ When Zambia began urgent arrangements to import essential fertiliser supplies from the south the company appointed to coordinate this traffic was none other than Freight Services. Back in September the operator of the Rhodesian oil-system, Richard Wilkinson, FS's Managing Director, was planning to send the fertiliser through Botswana. He then claimed that 'there is no question of opening the Rhodesian border for this'.

■ The current row over BP's involvement in a 'swap' arrangement with Sasol for supplying Rhodesia has rather overshadowed another important issue. Who is now providing the *crude* oil which is processed at the Natref refinery and subsequently sold to Rhodesia? Bingham claims that Natref purchases crude from just two sources: the National Iranian Oil Corporation and Shell. But both the Iranians and Shell claim to have received written assurances from Natref that not a drop of oil which they supply finds its way to Rhodesia after processing.

So what is happening? Sasol's tiny oil-from-coal plant has been one explanation – but its total output could only provide a quarter of Rhodesia's requirements. It has also been suggested that Natref could be drawing on South Africa's immense strategic stockpile – but it would be extremely cumbersome, if not impossible, to make sure that a specific consignment of crude was processed purely for Rhodesia (and who, in the first place, provided these stocks?). Once more it seems that 'assurances' from the oil industry are hardly worth the paper on which they are printed.

■ A few days ago I received a letter from the 'Society for Disillusionment', based at the Astoria Hotel, Calcutta. I can now reveal that my colleague Bernard Rivers and myself have just been awarded The Order of the Smoking Gun for our recent 'services to disillusionment'. The bearers are expected to maintain 'their sceptical attack on government, business and ideology'. If we obtain employment with representatives of any of the above three we are expected to tender our resignation from the Society.

Martin Bailey

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Christopher Hitchens: Namibia – The Birth of A Nation

'The conquest of the earth', wrote Conrad in his *Heart of Darkness*,' which mostly means the taking it away from people with a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it.' The root of the matter in Namibia is that it is Africa's last remaining colony from that period. Current discussion of its problems tends to centre on its role as a pawn between East and West, or North and South; on its standing as a 'chip' between Europe and Africa. But in truth, the struggle for Namibia today is the culmination of a long history of resistance and bloodshed. Those who look at it, or read about it, in terms of grand strategy will mistake the elementary point – which is that the Namibians have been denied self-determination and can be expected to fight for it with increasing vigour. The record is not very pretty when you look into it.

In 1904, when Namibia was still the German colony of South West Africa, General von Trotha found himself faced with a revolt of the Herero people of the territory. He stated in so many words: 'I believe that the Herero must be destroyed as a nation' and gave this order:

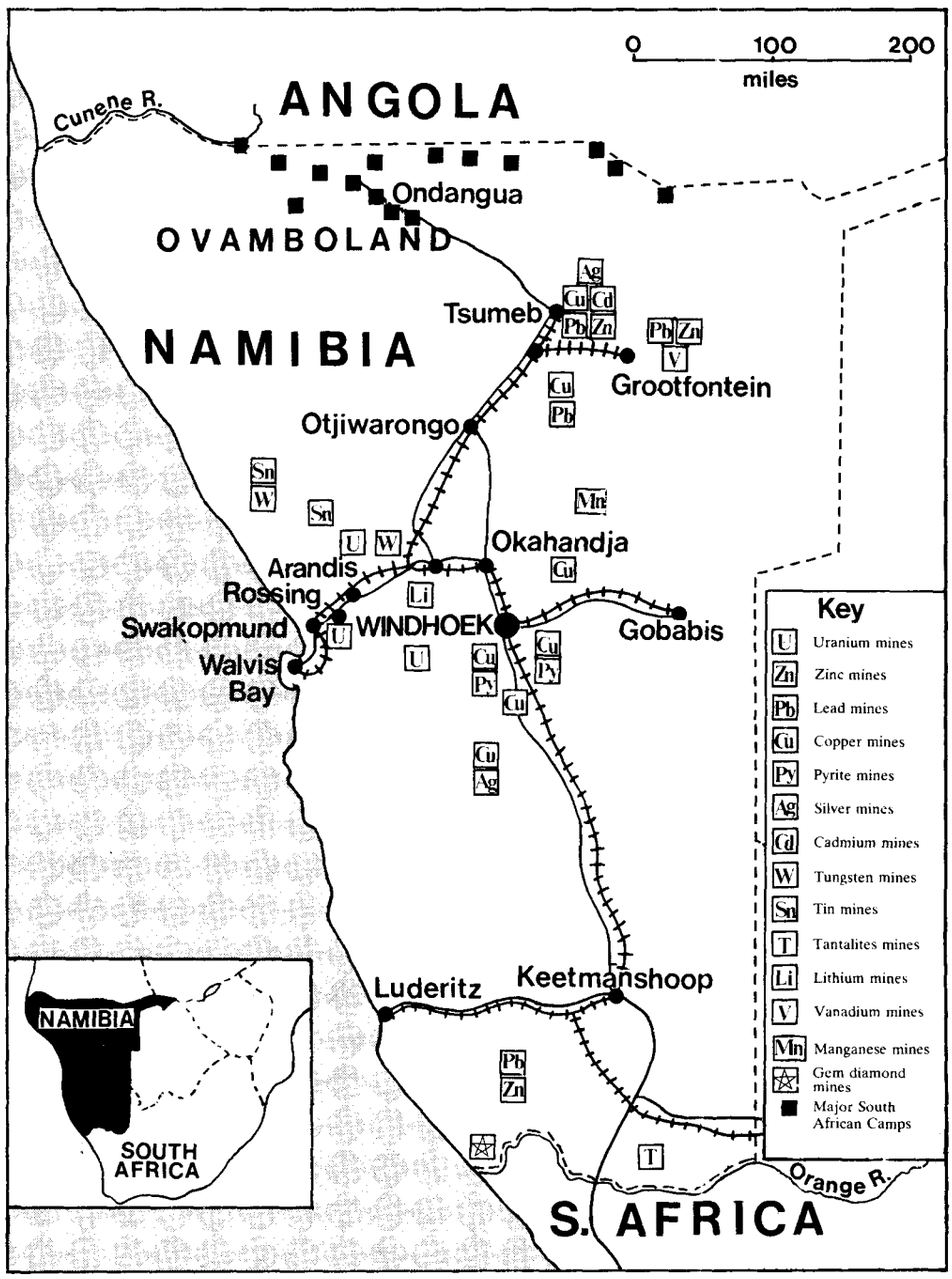
> Inside German territory every Herero tribesman, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. No women and children will be allowed in the territory, they will be driven back to their people or fired on. These are the last words to the Herero nation.

Von Trotha was as good as his word. The official report on the victorious campaign was later to exult:

> This bold enterprise shows up in the most brilliant light the ruthless energy of the German command in pursuing their beaten enemy. No pains, no sacrifice were spared . . . Like a wounded beast the enemy was tracked down from one water-hole to the next . . . The arid Omaheke (desert) was to complete what the German army had begun: *the extermination of the Herero nation.*

Nearly 80 per cent of the Herero perished, not counting those deported or reduced to destitution by the expropriation of land and cattle.

These reminders are worth having, in the first place because many people forget what colonialism was like (some historians argue that their Namibia policy fed the springs of racism and totalitarianism in Germany itself) and in the second because they bear on the present day. The Germans have gone – though you may still walk down Kaiserstrasse, the main street in Windhoek today, and turn right on Goeringstrasse, – but the tribal imbalance they created has remained. And today it is the South Africans who have inherited Namibia and still rule it as an illegal colony, exploiting the ancient Herero distrust of the Ovambo majority (which took little part in the anti-German resistance but has borne the brunt of the anti-South African one).



The South African authorities, who acquired South-West Africa as a League of Nations trust after the defeat of Imperial Germany, have resolutely refused to comply with the standards governing UN trusteeship, and since 1966 their occupation of the country has been declared illegal by the UN and the World Court. Namibia, as it is now known to all but the Boers, is the only such territory not to have been granted its independence.

ALTHOUGH DEPOPULATED by decades of neglect and maltreatment, the Namibians number nearly one million. The ruling caste consists of about 90,000 whites, a third of them German, who regard the country as virtually a fifth province of South Africa itself. It is rich in uranium, lead, zinc and diamonds. Fishing and agriculture prosper moderately. The place is a classic colony, where natural resources are exploited at top speed for export, and where the foreign exchange thus yielded is used to buy imported goods from 'the motherland' – in this case South Africa. Franchises on the extraction of raw materials are given to large multinational companies, who do rather well out of them.

Between 1946 and 1962, it was estimated that *one third* of the national income was shipped out in the form of profits, dividends and interest. This proportion does not seem to have altered – though figures are harder

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to come by – because the Gross National Product is still about two thirds of the Gross Domestic Product. Fifty-three per cent of investment capital in the country is provided by foreign firms, two of which (De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines and Tsumeb) account for 90 per cent of the whole mineral output. In 1972 the three major mining operations achieved gross profits of $92m, of which $9·8 went to the USA and $1·3 to the UK. *Over half* the total went out of the country altogether, much of it to South Africa. One mine, the Klein Aub, recouped its initial investment of 4·5 million Rand in just two years.

As the South African *Financial Mail* put it, Namibia's economy 'is operated in colonial style with South Africa as the imperial power, and with most of the spoils of fishing and mining sucked out by foreign firms'. Taxes on mineral extraction are low, as you might expect, so the administration runs at a loss. Another colonial twist is thereby added, because money must be borrowed from South Africa to make up the deficit. In 1974, for example, the administration had a deficit of $24m. It borrowed $9m from the South African Treasury, and the rest on an overdraft from the South African Reserve Bank. So the 'debt trap' becomes another instrument of rule.

UNSURPRISINGLY, this blatant and gigantic rip-off leaves very little left over for the African people, who must watch in fury and frustration while their country is stripped of the resources and treasures which they know to be rightfully and legally theirs. The apartheid system has been extended here too, with its brutal system of contract labour for those lucky enough to find work, and overcrowded Bantustans for the discarded remainder.

Men are taken from their families to live in shanties and compounds for months on end, and even in the most 'enlightened' firms the average wage is about half of the *official* 'Poverty Datum Line' – which is not very generously estimated to begin with. If you cross the hill outside white Windhoek, you can visit the barren township of Katutura (which means 'those of us without a home') and see the unsubtle contrast of rich white and poor black as clearly as in South Africa itself. Here is what Judge William Booth of the International Commission of Jurists found in a mine compound for Ovambo migrant workers:

> The men are housed in barracks-type buildings with only concrete locker-type beds for each man. The kitchen is quite unsanitary, with flies all over the place. The food is served through openings in a wire fence separating the cooking area from the dining area. Porridge is slapped in a bowl with a shovel . . .

And so on. Examples multiply. This is the system which enables foreign firms to gladden their shareholders while extracting the uranium which goes, in part, towards the construction of a South African nuclear capacity. Meanwhile, as the South African Professor John Dugard puts it, 'Law and convention combine to deny most of the rights laid down by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as far as black workers are concerned.' Nervousness about this on the part of the authorities has led to certain amendments – of which the most conspicuous is the stationing of thousands of South African combat troops in the territory, backed up with tanks and warplanes.

AS WELL THEY may be. The squalor and demoralisation of Katutura, visible to the casual observer, is deceptive in many ways. Seven years ago, the contract workers of Namibia mounted the first general strike ever seen in the apartheid system. Beginning in the Walvis Bay compound, the strike spread to Katutura and across Namibia in a matter of days.

The demands were for an end to the contract labour system, for freedom to travel, for the right to choose employment and for higher pay. But there were clear overtones of nationalism in the protest as well, and it was at this point that SWAPO, the South West African People's Organisation, came to the attention of the world. It arose as a challenge to the authority of the stooge 'chieftains' and 'headmen' of Ovamboland, maintained and backed up by South African occupation forces.

As ever in colonial systems, the colonisers say that the natives are too backward and savage to govern themselves, and at the same time reinforce precisely the backward and savage aspects of local life in order to rule more pervasively. The cosy alliance between local feudalism and foreign business was simply blown into the air by this strike, which involved fighting as far to the north as the border with Angola (then still a Portuguese colony).

Ovamboland, the Namibians in general, and SWAPO in particular, had rediscovered the apparently dormant tradition of African resistance; of those like Hendrik Witbooi and Chief Nikodemus who had fought the German despoliation of their land. Here, if ever, was an episode which justified the cliche about 'nothing being the same again'. From 1971 onwards, every organisation in Namibia has had to define itself in relation to SWAPO, which has made the transition from being a mainly Ovambo workers' movement to becoming a nationwide semi-legal alternative government. It has a firm power of veto over events, and has attracted the support or sympathy of the majority of Christian Churches in this intensely Christian country. In 1968, Herman Toivo ja Toivo, a founder of SWAPO, was sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island for his views. In his statement from the dock he had this to say:

> You, my Lord, decided that you had the right to try us. That ruling has not and could not have changed our feelings. We are Namibians and not South Africans. We do not now and will not in the future recognise your right to govern us; to make laws for us in which we had no say; to treat our country as if it were your property and as if you were our masters.

He was speaking at a time when international opinion knew and cared little about his country, but from then on SWAPO headed a substantial and genuine resistance which could not be gainsaid.

William Morris once remarked that radical change faced two adversary arguments – the argument of force and the argument of fraud. Both of these arguments

"If you were a primary teacher operating in the educational climate of 1976/1977 when the air was full of talk of declining standards and William Tyndale (not to mention *Teaching Styles*) and you were informed that you were to be observed by two HMI, how would you have reacted?"

Professor Neville Bennett is the author of *Teaching Styles* and Pupil Progress, which has dominated the debate on standards in the primary school. This week in The Times Educational Supplement he reviews the new survey of Primary Education in England by HM inspectors. He is critical both of its methodology and the theory behind it.

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have been used to the full by the South African occupation authorities, and are still being used. First, obviously, the argument of force.

THE RIB OF A Makalani palm branch makes a useful instrument of corporal punishment. Laid across the back or buttocks, it can produce unconsciousness after a dozen strokes, and usually necessitates hospital treatment after that. Thirty lashes was a common minimum punishment for years after the 1971 revolt – usually the sentence was administered in public and there was seldom if ever a hearing beforehand. The modesty of women was not spared either – to the horror of even the most traditional tribesmen, several females were stripped and flogged for such offences as the singing of SWAPO songs. Arrests, deportations and arbitrary imprisonment were inflicted at the same period – and only abated in late 1975, when SWAPO had proved its strength as a deterrent to repression. It had called for a boycott of the 1973 'elections', which resulted in a laughable voter turnout of 2·3 per cent. And it had established good relations with the new revolutionary government of Angola, which now shelters and aids SWAPO fighters.

(The South African general staff still persist in their 'stab in the back' theory about their defeat in the Angola war, and look on the possession of Namibia as a base for exacting revenge: they will be disappointed.)

South Africa's Official Secrets Act is rather like our own, so it is not possible to be precise about the number of soldiers she deploys in Namibia. But no estimate is less than 15,000 and many informed guesses go above 20,000. Then you must add the presence of the South African navy at Walvis Bay (a disputed enclave on the coast) and the almost complete vulnerability of Namibia to the South African air force. Tactics against the 'people's war' in the North have included the usual arsenal of collective punishment, strategic hamlets, informers, villages burned for feeding guerrillas and 'hot pursuit' of fighters into Angola. There are thousands of Namibians driven into exile (enough in itself to make the forthcoming 'elections' unfair) and many more homeless and destitute as a result of the heirs of von Trotha. General von Geldenhuys, the head of the occupation forces, freely tells questioners that his army is prepared for indefinite war. New installations and airstrips are being built – at the very time when Pretoria talks of 'independence'.

All the lineaments of a classic colonial war can be observed. And of course, as is usual with such wars, this one is strengthening the drive to totalitarianism in 'the motherland'. The Germans discovered too late that they had imported some nasty habits from their rule in the area – and certainly in South Africa many of these nasty habits were and are already pretty well-developed. But Namibia has increased the war and garrison atmosphere in South Africa, has imposed conscription on more unwilling young men, has intensified the pressure of censorship, spy-fever and official deceit. Not for the first time the argument of force has been directly complemented by the argument of fraud.

IT'S A FAIRLY transparent kind of a fraud, resting on the old strategy of divide and rule, and the old tactic of making 'concessions' while seeming to 'stand firm against terror'. If hypocrisy is the compliment which vice pays to virtue, then SWAPO can feel flattered by the number of 'adjustments' made to apartheid in Namibia by a government which claims that SWAPO is a negligible force. Certain kinds of racial segregation have formally, if not actually, been abolished. The occupying power wears a 'multiracial' garb these days, as an implied concession to SWAPO, though white-supremacist parties are still at the core of the system. Mr Dirk Mudge, the leader of the 'Democratic Turnhalle (Drill-Hall) Alliance', (named after the refurbished building where it was founded) makes the best he can of his black lieutenants but is careful to keep all the money and power in a few hands. Attendance at one of his rallies is a great experience, not unlike a rather desperate Florida primary: lavish hospitality, free gifts and souvenirs, teeshirts and matchboxes everywhere bearing the Drill-Hall symbol. There is careful and expensive stewarding, with two-way radios and bullhorns much in evidence. There is also the bonus of free food, especially meat (which attracts some SWAPO supporters from the poor side of town, who smilingly told me that while the DTA might be a small thing, a free feed was not).

> 'Colonial war is strengthening tyranny in the "motherland"'

South African negotiators told the Western ministers that they believed the DTA capable of winning any election any time. This makes it all the more odd that they want one so soon, with so little supervision, and that they have cancelled or discounted so many votes in the past. The reality is that Pretoria turns the Drill-Hall Alliance on and off like a tap. Still, it testifies to the power of SWAPO that Botha will consider for Namibia what he would never consider for South Africa – universal suffrage and a scaling down of racial humiliation. Of course, those who go too far in assuming the right to criticise (like Father Heinz Hunke and Bishop Ed Morrow) are speedily deported by the South African proconsul 'Judge' Steyn.

The businessmen who have done so handsomely by Namibia's misery are naturally in favour of the Drill-Hall Alliance, because SWAPO has declared for public ownership of natural resources. These same businessmen have allies further afield –notably in West Germany where 'sources close' to Strauss's CSU have been eager and helpful. It was they who helped Dirk Mudge to buy up most of the newspapers in Windhoek and secure Drill-Hall control over press coverage (radio and TV being safe creatures already). Interests like these also dispense the final 'argument of fraud': economic blackmail.

It is said, and believed by some Africans, that if SWAPO comes to power then all the whites and all the investment will leave. They can't, of course, take all the diamonds and uranium with them, though they are trying to send them on ahead. But considerable dislocation could be envisaged; as when the French pulled out of Guinea taking every last book and lightbulb. Already, there are some signs of capital flight as SWAPO's chances improve. Worse still, there are threats issuing from South Africa's continuing control of Walvis Bay, the country's only deep-water port, ownership of which has been discreetly transferred to the Cape Province authorities in South Africa itself. The waters which irrigate Namibia are pumped to the surface within Walvis itself, and serve the Rossing uranium mines among other locations. It will be up to an independent Namibia to repossess Walvis Bay, to stimulate the neglected and stagnant black economy, where apartheid is a fetter on any kind of development, and to extend their fishing limits. (Irresponsible colonial overfishing has reduced the pilchard catch to one tenth of its 1976 level.)

THE ATTITUDE OF the democratic West to Namibia's lone and protracted struggle has been feeble and trimming. Like most wrong and dishonest policies on the international scene, it owes a good deal to Dr Henry Kissinger. Typically, he combined 'tough-minded' public warnings to South Africa with the most abject private diplomacy and reassurance. Appropriately, the initial meetings between Kissinger and Vorster took place in Strauss's Bavaria. An idea of their futility can be gauged from the fact that Vorster was subsequently hailed for his help in getting Ian Smith to see reason (vintage 1976). He was later to be hailed for his 'flexibility' over Namibia, a flexibility which he repudiated in his retirement speech by effectively rejecting any SWAPO role in the future of Namibia. This remains, and always was, the policy of South Africa's rulers. In the words of the old saying, you don't expect anything from a pig but a grunt.

Given the lesson of Rhodesia, with its 'thirteen wasted years', this Western reluctance to come off the fence is even more depressing. Here is another wretched UDI, being prepared almost with insouciance by the South African authorities. They propose to fix a ballot for a white supremacist front, backed by the most short-sighted business interests and held in place by foreign troops. The Western response has been to try and overlook this and attempt to get another vote next year – with the same ruling system in charge and the same troops in position. SWAPO, unsurprisingly, wants no part of it. The 'Western Five' met P. W. Botha and his team without advisors or officials being

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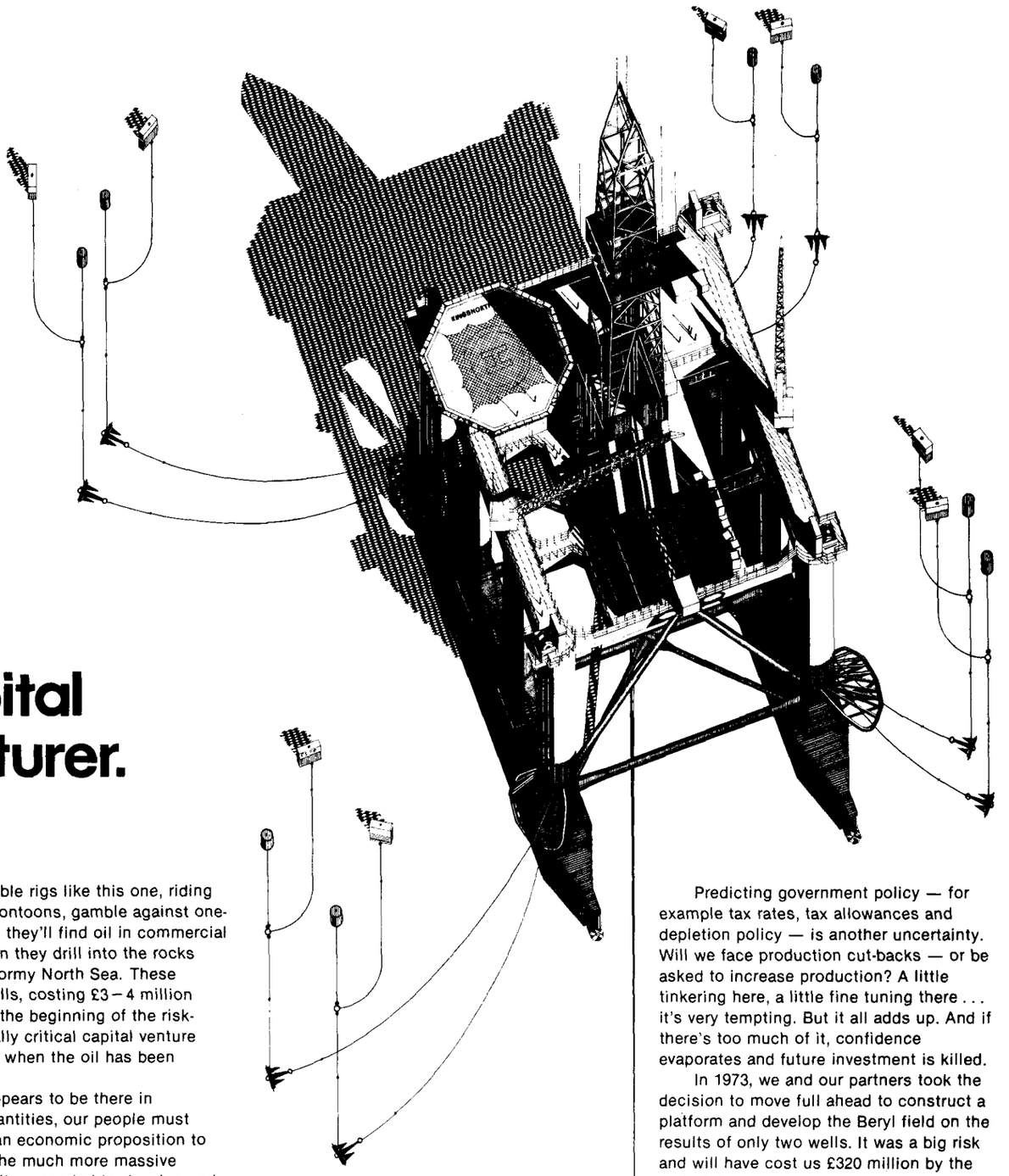

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Semi-submersible rigs like this one, riding on their twin pontoons, gamble against one-in-14 odds that they'll find oil in commercial quantities when they drill into the rocks beneath the stormy North Sea. These exploratory wells, costing £3–4 million each, are only the beginning of the risk-taking. The *really* critical capital venture can come only when the oil has been *found*.

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At that point — the crucial decision whether to go into production — oil and investment teeter in the balance. But there's nothing exotic or mysterious about the decision process. It's a question of economics: are the gains likely to outweigh the costs? Or, put another way, is this venture going to be *profitable?*

We first add up the costs. How much money do we need? Where can we raise it? What must we pay in interest? When must the loans be repaid? Do we have, or can we train, the skilled personnel needed? What sort of government regulatory and taxation policies can we expect, and how will these affect our costs over the likely lifespan of the field?

Against these costs we estimate the possible gains. How much oil is in the reservoir, and how is it distributed? How much can actually be extracted and in what quantities, year by year? To what extent can the wells thus far drilled be relied upon to tell us the nature and behaviour of the reservoir? Should the gas produced be injected back into the reservoir? And what will be the value of the oil we bring up — not just a few years hence, when production begins, but even in the early part of the next century when we might expect the reserves to run out.

One would always like that little bit more information about a reservoir to help in decision-making. But the £3–4 million cost of drilling another appraisal well (and the delay it involves) has to be weighed against the value of the new data. It's always a very uncertain business, involving critical judgements on the long-term behaviour of oil and gas deposits thousands of feet beneath the earth's surface.

Predicting government policy — for example tax rates, tax allowances and depletion policy — is another uncertainty. Will we face production cut-backs — or be asked to increase production? A little tinkering here, a little fine tuning there . . . it's very tempting. But it all adds up. And if there's too much of it, confidence evaporates and future investment is killed.

In 1973, we and our partners took the decision to move full ahead to construct a platform and develop the Beryl field on the results of only two wells. It was a big risk and will have cost us £320 million by the end of this year.

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present. The entire ambience was too cosy, and disappointed those who had negotiated the earlier UN deal (accepted by South Africa in the hope that SWAPO would reject it; ditched by South Africa when SWAPO accepted it).

The sell-out is the more deplorable when you remember that Namibia, unlike Rhodesia, has a relatively unified liberation force and a solidly-demonstrated popular backing for it. There are no excuses about 'splits in the Patriotic Front' to be made, no reasons for procrastination, no reason to treat with the illegal colonial power on an equal footing with its subjects and opponents. Above all, no reason for Jimmy Carter to invite Botha to Washington on a visit – something that only the Paraguayans have ever done so far. As Herman Toivo ja Toivo also said in that speech from the dock:

> The world is important to us. In the same way as all laughed in court when they heard that an old man tried to bring down a helicopter with a bow and arrow, we laughed when South Africa said that it would oppose the world. We knew that the world was divided, but as time went on it at least agreed that South Africa had no right to rule us.

Perhaps. That was ten years ago. Namibia's resistance is now preparing for the next round, and will compel more urgent attention. The twentieth century has subjected it to genocide, famine, dispossession, deportation and every other kind of indignity. The signs are, though, that three quarters of a century after von Trotha thought he had done for them, the Namibians are beginning to come home. If the West wants to be taken seriously by independent Africa, it should get itself on the right side for a change.

R. Sundar Rajan on the spectre that haunts India

Indira Gandhi's return from the wilderness

On the way to Chikmagalur, the remote pepper and coconut country in south India from which she is trying to re-enter parliament in the crucial 5 November by-election, Mrs Gandhi worshipped at several temples. She spent many hours in the *ashram* of Sringeri Swami, a leading religious figure who has somehow managed to equate Hinduism with authoritarianism. Prostrating herself at the Swami's feet, she asked for divine blessings in her attempt to cleanse India of the sins of the Janata Party which sent her into the political wilderness 19 months ago in a sensational general election. According to one newspaper, the holy man pronounced that Mrs Gandhi's bad days were almost over. She filed her nomination papers before the returning officer at an auspicious moment decided by Hindu astrologers, waiting for *rahu kalam*, the daily conjunction of evil stars, to pass. Her election campaign has been marked by vigour and aggressiveness. The Mrs Gandhi the people of Chikmagalur have been seeing is not the defeated, nervous woman of March 1977. Indeed, she radiates a disquieting buoyancy.

Contrary to published reports, it is not true that Mrs Gandhi was stampeded into filing her nomination at Chikmagalur by her son Sanjay and the small group of politicians loyal to her from the days before she clamped down the emergency in June 1975. She has been toying with the idea of re-entering parliament for almost a year. Among other things, being an MP will enable her to face judicial actions against her (for excesses committed during and before the emergency) more boldly. As leader of the opposition, she may well dominate the House. Ironically, the press she brutally gagged and which the Janata Party liberated is quite indulgent to her.

The expectation is – should Mrs Gandhi win the by-election – that parliament will become even more stormy than in the last 19 months. The opposition Congress Party faction of which she is president made the functioning of the House almost impossible during the recent monsoon session. The main issue was the alleged corrupt practices of Mr Kanti Desai, Prime Minister Morarji Desai's controversial son. The chief aim of her followers has been to divert attention from the several court cases against Mrs Gandhi's son who recently spent a month in prison for trying to influence witnesses and staging rowdy scenes in court. The effort has succeeded to some extent. Many people believe that the young Desai is as villainous as the young Gandhi, though the truth is that the former is apparently only interested in making more money while the latter planned to succeed his mother in high office.

Membership of parliament may provide some relief to Mrs Gandhi in her court ordeals. But, as some politicians in her Congress faction admit, her very presence in the house may help to unite the disparate Janata Party. Though Mr Desai has acquired a firmer grip over party affairs in recent weeks, the 5-party ruling coalition – it is still nothing more than a coalition – has witnessed several unseemly squabbles, resulting in the exit of two cabinet ministers. Mr Charan Singh, the former Home Minister, has given much comfort to Janata's enemies by raking up some old financial scandals involving Mr Kanti Desai,

while Mr Raj Narain, the former Health Minister, is busy demolishing the reputation of Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram, the No. 2 man in the cabinet, by delving into what he calls the 'sexual indiscretions' of Mr Ram's son. Mr Narain's followers waylaid the young man on a recent night and snatched away colour photographs showing him in copulatory bliss with his secretary. The couple have told the police that they were forced to enact the scenes at gun point! Meanwhile, Mr Raj Narain passed on the pictures to Maneka Gandhi, Mrs Gandhi's daughter-in-law and fledgeling editor of a monthly magazine called *Surya*. An estimated 120,000 copies of *Surya* containing the photographs have been printed and several hundreds distributed in Chikmagalur in an attempt to tarnish the image of the Janata Party.

Mrs Gandhi is making excellent political capital out of the squabbles in the Janata Party. She rightly points out that these have slowed down the wheels of the administration and projected a dismal picture of Indian democracy in action. But where she is wrong is in claiming that 'except for some misguided elements under Western influence, most of our people supported the emergency which I was forced to declare'. The real reason why she chose a constituency in the far south is to be found in the fact that few emergency excesses were committed there and voters have almost no recollection of the 19 months of horror.

Meanwhile, irrespective of the outcome of the Chikmagalur election, Mrs Gandhi is hoping to make the most out of her forthcoming trip to Britain, her first foreign journey since her fall from glory. She has been telling election rallies that 'even the Prime Minister of Britain has praised me for ordering a general election'. While recounting the blessings of the emergency, she makes the point that 'situations like the emergency are really abnormal'. But the important thing to remember is that Mrs Gandhi continues to be totally unrepentant about the way she cooked up an imaginary threat to law and order, banished tens of thousands to prison, stripped the judiciary of its powers, made a mockery of parliament, and built up her

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power-hungry son as her successor.

Nineteen months out of office have not changed Mrs Gandhi's touching faith in the wonders of strong-arm rule. She has said enough to show that given the opportunity she will do much the same thing again. Her emergency did evoke some admiration among British politicians including a few in the Labour Party. Thoughtful people in India are wondering whether Mrs Gandhi will return with some more certificates from Britain. The biggest irony is that she will be in Britain in connection with Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday celebrations. Rarely has a father been so cruelly betrayed by a daughter. The betrayal continues.

New Delhi

Phillip Whitehead on Spain's new constitution

The birth of the Euromonarchists

Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabela the Catholic, each with one foot nervously thrust forward into the sixteenth century, as if frozen in some eternal game of Grandmother's Footsteps, look down on the oddly theatrical chamber of the Spanish Cortes. The scene they witnessed on Tuesday, when both houses of the Spanish parliament voted overwhelmingly for a new constitution, presented a happy contrast to the bitter debates on the constitution of the second Republic. That began the slow drift to civil war. This is to be a constitution for all Spaniards, achieved by a consensus which excludes only the Basque nationalists. It was the defence spokesman of the PSOE, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, who described it to me as 'one of the most democratic constitutions in the world', although it establishes a constitutional monarchy and not the republic for which the PSOE fought for so long.

This constitutional consensus has brought Spain a long way. From the King to the Communists, the Spaniards have tried to learn from the past, and to show that their differences can be resolved by discussion. The main parties put on such a show of public amity that one could say that they are using the 'propaganda of the dead' in exactly the opposite sense to the way that phrase was used in the Thirties. King Juan Carlos appears to be that rarity, a Bourbon who has learned much and forgotten much. His official portraits give him the slightly resentful look of a man who has forgotten his wallet; but it is Franco's brainwashing he has forgotten. The Communist leader, Santiago Carrillo, is putting his weight behind the new constitution, too, even though it favours the two big parties: the ruling Union of the Democratic Centre – a coalition of fifteen 'bourgeois' parties, led by former middle-ranking officials of the dictatorship – and the PSOE, which has absorbed the smaller Popular Socialist Party. Next year will be the centenary year of the PSOE, and it could also see the socialists in power.

The ruling party is an instrument moulded to the wishes of Spain's handsome and urbane prime minister, Adolfo Suarez. When he played host last weekend to a visiting delegation from the Council of Europe, his remarks were heavily laced with references to social justice and a fair society. There are indeed social democrats in his ranks. But a glance at the smart folks who throng the party's great occasions, or at the rank and file who want to listen to such fellow spirits as Michel Poniatowski and Margaret Thatcher, the Pasionaria of Privilege in person, reveals the party's true nature. The elite that was known in Franco's day as 'the others' is still in power. Suarez was a boy wonder as governor of Segovia under Franco. He has moved a long way to the Left. He will be hard put to it to move any further in that direction at the head of the party he now leads.

Suarez is 46. Felipe Gonzalez, the leader of the PSOE, is ten years younger. The king is 41. Seventy per cent of all Spaniards are under forty, and have therefore no personal memory of the civil war. But a young country is also an impatient country. That is why, now that the new constitution has passed the Cortes, and after the December referendum, the kissing will have to stop.

In spite of last year's Moncloa Pact between the parties, for joint action on the economy, the hard fact is that unemployment is running at over 8 per cent. Inflation is at 18 per cent. And terrorist acts by extremists of Left and Right, as well as by Basque ETA separatists, are almost daily occurrences. Local elections will have to be held within 90 days of the referendum, and both the PSOE and the Communists will do well in the big towns. Gonzalez argues that the Cortes should also be dissolved, now that it has done its work as a constituent assembly by drafting the constitution. If the government does badly in the local elections, it may seek a vote of confidence in the Cortes, and try to carry on for the four-year term to 1981. It has no overall majority, but it may find the other parties willing to abstain, rather than to vote the PSOE into power. The Francoist Popular Alliance was badly cut up in the 1977 election. And the Communists may astonish even themselves by their moderation. ('Carrillo is not content to be the first among Eurocommunists', Felipe Gonzalez quipped to me, 'He wants to be the first among Euromonarchists as well.')

Gonzalez is not willing to extend the Moncloa Pact with the government unless it agrees to fix an election date, and makes unemployment its first priority. He is a vehement supporter of the government's main initiative in foreign policy, Spain's application to join the EEC. 'For us,' he says, 'It is an issue of unanimity.' But because of the PSOE's opposition Suarez will not risk trying to take Spain into NATO. The main issues between the Socialists and the government are not foreign, but domestic, and the Socialists believe that 1979 will be their year. In their crowded headquarters, where the old men who came back are far outnumbered by the young men who grew up in the Sixties, the PSOE projects a moderate image. Gonzalez even insisted to me that the party has never been a Marxist one (historically a dubious claim) though he added that it welcomes all 'non-Leninists' to its ranks. His speeches distinguish carefully between the ideal and the achievable, and between the good and the bad democrats in the other parties, while appealing to those in Spain who for forty years have been the dispossessed. *Militares a la calle*, say the graffiti on the walls outside the PSOE headquarters: 'soldiers into the street'. Gonzalez knows that the politics of the street could still prevail.

Spain's economic problems seem as familiar to us as her new constitutional arrangements. Even the violence of the ETA extremists has an echo of Belfast. But Felipe Gonzalez must seek to bring about elections in 1979 in the knowledge that it is not just Basque separatism, nor urban terror like this week's bombing at the newspaper, *El Pais*, that threaten the State with violence. For their different reasons, all the different extremists would welcome a military backlash. The police mutiny in Bilbao; the remarks of the Spanish army Chief of Staff in Argentina last July, when he said that 'only history can judge the legitimacy of the use of force'; the retired officers pining for a *pronunciamento*: all of these things, so far, have been shrugged aside by Spain's new democracy as easily as the Madrid shoppers last weekend elbowed young Falangist demonstrators out of their way on the Avenida Jose Antonio.

It might be different if the Socialists were in power. That might unleash the forces that for the moment are being held in check. Their defence expert, Enrique Muhica Herzog, denies it. So does the defence minister in the UCD government, General Manuel Gutierrez Mellado. The two men see each other, and the King, regularly. All three know that the point of maximum danger for Spanish democracy has not yet been reached. The Socialists want to remember their centenary as the year of the ballots, not the year of barricades.

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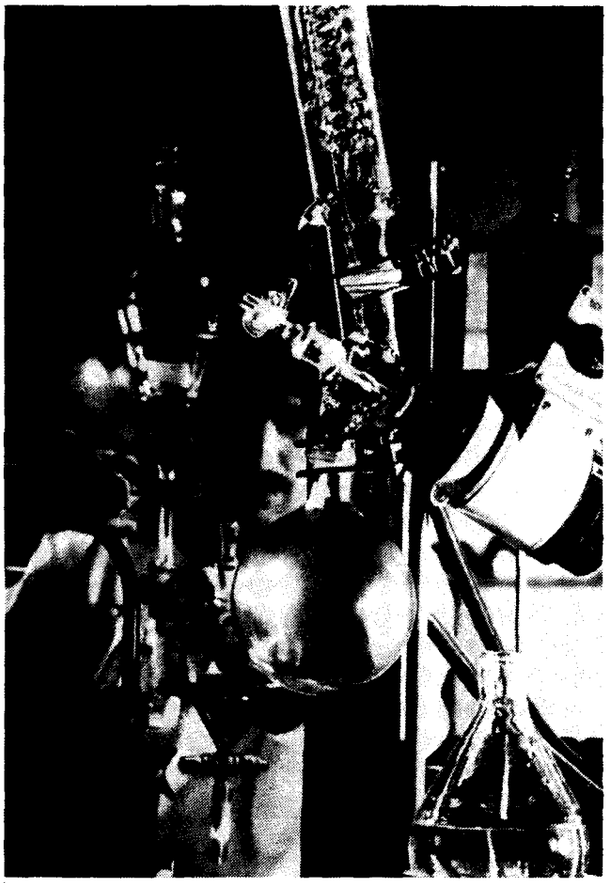
Michael Taylor's research always goes up in smoke.



Left: Research under way in Imperial's own laboratories.

Currently the head of the Leaf Physics Group in Imperial Tobacco's Research Department, Michael Taylor has contributed a lot to the development of low tar cigarettes.

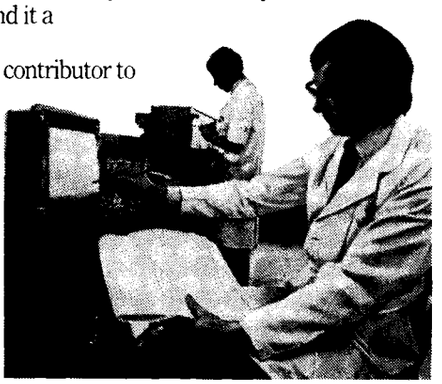
"Back in the mid-1960s, we decided, in consultation with the Government, to devote a great deal of time and effort to reducing the "tar yield" of cigarettes. And we've made substantial progress—largely through basic work on cigarette design and specification.

"We've developed new tobacco blends, and found new sources of supply. We've improved the performance of filters substantially. And we've modified the actual cigarette paper a good deal, too.

"All this research and development has contributed to the fact that British smokers today enjoy cigarettes yielding over 40% less tar than they did a few years ago; helped, naturally, by increased advertising and promotion of low-tar brands.

"One of the disciplines which I personally find interesting, is the need to produce improvements which are acceptable to the customer. We're a business, after all, employing more than 20,000 people in the UK alone; and there's no point devising a new cigarette that nobody actually wants to smoke.

"We make a very considerable investment in research and development in Imperial Tobacco; several million a year, in fact. There are a lot of very complicated problems to be solved—but then, the job would hardly be so interesting without them. All in all, I find it a fascinating and worthwhile job."



Michael Taylor, an important contributor to what the Minister of State for Health described last year as the tobacco industry's "long-standing policy of reducing... the tar yield of cigarettes," is just one of the 20,000 people in the UK who make up Imperial Tobacco, the major British-owned tobacco company trading in the United Kingdom and a major taxpayer and investor in Britain's future.

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London Diary

☐ Having missed *The Mousetrap*, I thought it was about time I went to the next longest-running show in London. Queues were forming early on Tuesday outside Bow Street magistrates court, where Astrid Proll, the alleged German terrorist, was appearing for her weekly extradition charge (bail, now totalling £73,000, was again refused). 'Why did you have to get assaulted last night?' a young woman abused her husband. 'We could have been straight in and out, without all this waiting'. Apart from Tel Aviv airport, I have never known such stringent security. The woman police officers went through my cheque book, my cigarettes, and even took my beret off in case a machine-gun was hidden inside. 'We used to get a lot of lip, but they've calmed down a bit now', said one of Miss Proll's friends. 'They used to accuse us of just coming in for a quick feel-up by the police.'

Rumours of lesbianism were not borne out by the collection in the public gallery. True, flowers were thrown as Miss Proll left the dock, but the audience included diverse heterosexuals, among them tramps, social workers, teachers and an American student 'majoring in political science.' He had attended every extradition hearing. 'I just love your British way of justice, it's so polite', he said. It certainly was. Refusing bail yet again, the magistrate, Mr Evelyn Russell, kindly remarked that Miss Proll would be remanded in custody until November 7. 'I think you are a very resourceful lady', he said, 'but, this being a free country, I feel that it would be too easy for you to escape'.

Miss Proll's advisers are not too impressed by the courtesy. (Actually, neither was I. As the van taking her back to Brixton prison was about to move out, a policeman advised me to go over to the other side of the road. 'After all, madam, you don't want to get knocked down, do you?' I did as instructed – and was promptly knocked down by a passing taxi.) 'There has been nothing like this in my experience', commented Laurence Grant, Miss Proll's solicitor. 'I am not allowed private talks with my client – surely one of the bases of British law. Nor am I allowed access to documentation, without its first being seen by the "authorities". This is contrary to all precedent'.

Despite attempts by the British press to play down the matter (after the initial sexual innuendoes) the case threatens to become a *cause célèbre* and is attracting world attention. On Tuesday, the British Embassy in Lisbon was picketed, and hundreds of letters have arrived (none of which Miss Proll is allowed to read) protesting against her treatment. Locally, the rather sleasy Opera Snack Bar opposite Bow Street has been transformed into an unofficial court of international jurisprudence, with various international camera crews and journalists from *Stern* arguing furiously over its respective merits. The German prosecution documents, promised for October 16, have still not arrived. So Miss Proll, unfortunately, might well end up rivalling *The Mousetrap*.

☐ Bennie Gray, who opened his *sixth* antiques market this week, is now among the top antique entrepreneurs in the country. Reconciliation between private wealth and socialist principles has always been difficult. But Mr Gray, a person of fine and devious intellect (the two are not necessarily contradictory) has few problems of conscience. 'Only by contributing to an allegedly decadent society', he told me, 'can we achieve world revolution.'

He did it the hard way. Now 42, he took a *reluctant First in engineering at London*. A man of immense ambition and energy, he rapidly became dissatisfied with his first torpid job as a salesman of agricultural machinery, and decided to make some money. He started in property development with the conversion into flats of a large house near Harrods, living meanwhile with little more than a grotty sink, a bare electric light bulb and a bed. The money then beginning to pour in, he threw it all up to become – with no previous experience – the World's Greatest Pianist. Within six months, he was playing a tolerable Chopin prelude; but, his teacher assuring him that he would never be a virtuoso, he promptly gave it up. 'It was either Horowitz, or nothing', he says. He then returned to money-making, this time in antiques, an activity leavened by his latest passion, Marxism. It was a combination which allowed him to enjoy wealth with a clear conscience.

His passion for the extreme Left, however, was as short-lived as his pianistic career. Disillusioned, like many another, with the petty internecine squabbles, he has now ascended into what he describes as 'mild anarchy'. He is a solo activist, in the practical rather than the terrorist sense. His major achievement in this field, along with his rather unlikely co-fighter Christopher Booker, was to stop the destruction of Tolmers Square by property developers – a neat poetic reversal for one who had himself started off in property. For this, accomplished in the teeth of Camden Council, he and Booker were awarded prizes as campaigning journalists of the year.

What next for a man who wears many hats (including his Herbert Johnson)? Buddhism? Transcendental Meditation? Preservation of voles, badgers and seals? For a man of such various social concerns, the possibilities are endless. Somehow, though, I doubt that his latest antiques market will be the last. 'Maybe', he says, 'I should get a job'.

☐ Four years have elapsed since the last collected edition of *This England*, one of the most popular features of the NEW STATESMAN (sorry about that, front half). Ignore the back cover of the latest edition, with its assertion that 'Privilege is still here, even if different voices defend different goodies; discrimination is still here, taking in sex now as well as race.' I much prefer the opinion of the Emeritus Professor of History at the Sheffield North-Western Polytechnic. 'In 200 years' time', he declaimed to his apathetic students, 'this booklet, now a mere 80p, will be regarded as the Holinshed *de nos jours* – not to mention that it is a much briefer version of Aubrey's *Brief Lives*. The whole of human life, as someone once put it, is here: the follies, the ironies, the jokes masking deep tragedies. Were I to sum it up, I would have to say that this compendium represents the still centre of the turning world. I cannot say more.' Personally, however, I would advise readers that, though a good bedside book, it is no good for the bath, not being waterproofed. But this is a minor quibble. There is a giggle a paragraph, which is more than you usually get these days.

☐ With mathematical congresses going on all over, I have to admit to boring my friends for several weeks now with one of the few stories I understand. Ramanujam, an expert in the theory of numbers, was dying of tuberculosis while still in his twenties. G. M. Hardy, the Cambridge mathematician, and Ramanujam's mentor, visited him frequently but, a rather shy man, found conversation difficult. Shortly before Ramanujam died, he arrived at the hospital and could think of nothing better to say than 'The number of my taxi was 1729. I doubt if even you could find anything interesting in that.' Nothing dismayed, Ramanujam replied: 'Nonsense. It is one of the most interesting numbers in the world. It is the smallest number that can be expressed in two different ways as the sum of two cubes.' ($12^3 + 1^3 = 1729$; $10^3 + 9^3 = 1729$). No-one believes me, but if you can find a smaller one, let me know. Even more important, what would be the next number up, working on the same principle?

Ruth Hall

This England

This week we publish a collection of the most amusing This Englands of the last four years (see above). Here are a few to whet your appetite. The whole meal can be obtained from booksellers throughout the UK, price 80p, or direct from Turnstile Press, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1 at 90p, including postage.

☐ There have been various occasions since he became an England cricketer when Greig has overplayed his hand . . . What has to be remembered, of course, is that he is an Englishman not by birth or upbringing, but only by adoption. It is not the same thing as being English through and through. – *The Times.*

☐ Mr Healey, Chancellor, has been received with a certain iciness in his home village of Withyham, East Sussex, since his proposals for a wealth tax were published. 'The fellow waved at me the other day,' said one staunch Conservative, 'and I thought "You swine," and looked the other way.' Another resident added: 'I think quite a lot of people go and kick his gate to show what they feel.' – *Daily Telegraph.*

☐ People tend to think of rape in 'a rather Victorian way,' Mr David Mackenzie Ross, the barrister who defended Patrick Moving, said yesterday. 'We tend to get over-censorious about it,' he said. 'Rape is an emotive word in so far as women tend to put great stress upon it as being something unpleasant.' –*Sunday Mirror*

☐ All the offences, Mr Taylor said, were committed before the boy was 15 years old. But a social worker told magistrates about him: 'These kids would not have such a bad record if the police would not keep arresting them.' – *Guardian.*

☐ Mr Justice Boreham told her: 'This is an exceptional case. You have shown yourself to be a good wife, a good mother and a good housewife and I cannot think of anything more one could say about any woman.' – *Evening Standard.*

☐ Mr Dennis MacShane, National Union of Journalists, read out a recent headline from a Fleet Street newspaper: 'Asian father of 12 on £100 a week social security.' He said: 'We wrote to the managing editor saying it was unacceptable. He wrote back saying if the word Asian was not in the headline people might have thought he was Irish.' – *The Times.*

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Look Out!

Life is, as the more senior of us know to our cost, one long procession of assorted shocks, major or minor as the case may be. Not the slightest use protesting about it. I am merely adding this complaint to the various other ones that I wish to make, subsequently and in the happy Hereafter, to the Supreme Architect. All these jolts and jumps play merry hell with one's physique. A relatively minor shock occurred fairly early on in what I am pleased to refer to as my army career. Called to the colours and ready to do or die, with a marked preference for the former. I found myself eventually in Northern Ireland and requested by a very pleasant regular Colonel ('Sam' to his chums and a distinguished soldier who seemed in no way to resent, as some did, those of us who were his amateur and temporary colleagues) to investigate and write a report on the sabotage possibilities and risks of a large petrol dump six miles from Belfast. Leaping to answer the challenge, I tirelessly investigated and reported, handing proudly in to the Colonel several pages of carefully thought-out and reasoned prose, all neatly typed. My report was returned to me next day with but one comment on it. 'BF' it said.

Now whatever could I have done wrong to deserve such a vulgar reproof? Even though protectively reared and nurtured in the fully wholesome ambience of Oundle School, I knew well enough what the letters BF stood for (for those more innocent than I, let me explain that the 'F' stands for Fool, and the 'B' for a suitable adjective to accompany it). To make the sharp criticism even more hurtful, I saw that Colonel Sam had signed it and had added the date. But, very unlike him, it was the wrong date and for a day a week later. Unaccustomed as I was to military office procedure and parlance (my first reaction on being instructed to 'lay on a car' was to reply 'certainly not: why should I?'), I did not then know, and more fool me, that BF meant Bring Forward on the date indicated. This I duly did, after everything had been patiently explained to me, and received a typically warm commendation. The Colonel, though not I, advanced to high rank. We thought the world of him, and for our money he could have commanded the entire army.

Death now seems to provide many more sharp shocks than it used to. Whatever happened to those long, lingering, lachrymose Victorian demises with the whole family gathered round the bed and contributing, each in his or her own individual way, sobs and sniffles and hiccoughs? Then there were those death-bed dialogue clichés, with old granny, much muffled in woollies and propped up on pillows, saying quaveringly 'How dark it's getting! Light the lights', upon which a relative leans forward and answers 'But granny, the lights *are* lit' and then adds, in a hurried aside to those present, 'She's going!' Not so now. People just plop down where they, so to speak, stand. 'Keep right on to the end of the road' isn't in it. I mean no disrespect to the defunct when I say that I favour a cold, brisk attitude to death. A quick gulp and then on with the dusting. If there is a heaven, well and good. And if not, not.

The shock of the Pope's death (plainly such an agreeable and happy and unusual holder of that office) was almost equalled by two avoidable shocks that followed it. The first was the appalling parading and moving about of the exposed dead body, wobbling shoulder-high (dead feet in a dead man's shoes are particularly disagreeable and unacceptable), coupled with the suggestion from some uninspired quarter that the body should be taken 'for a last visit' to Venice, a grisly holiday trip if ever there was one. The second, and lesser, shock was provided by the inept explanations given by eminent divines, cornered by relentless interviewers, as to the 'reasons' for the death. 'Perhaps' said one, looking totally nonplussed, as well he might, 'God is trying to tell us something.' It seems to me to belittle the dignity and sense of any possible God to suggest that He should arrange such very elaborate discomfitures and inconveniences to get some simple message across. And the re-convening of the Cardinals (travelling first class, I assume, and from far afield), together with the fact, as reported by the telly, that the entire Holy City staff is immediately put on overtime or double pay or something, is apparently going to bankrupt the Vatican. Can this really be part of the divine plan? My answer, as so often, is 'Bosh!'

Religion provided, in my youth, two further shocks and the first was the discovery of how limited was its ability to improve character. In all Essex there can have been no more devout churchgoer than my grandmother who, in a hat skewered with more hat pins than those blades round a knife-thrower's victims, set off in all weathers, wearing also a *visage d'occasion* suitable for the front pews. On her return, I always expected to see in her a fresh radiance but not a bit of it. Nor had she, plainly, kept her mind on the business in hand ('Poor old Hilda's looking terribly raggle-taggle. I hardly recognised her'). There was a further problem. My grandmother came from that comfortable and financially secure middle-class belt whose Christianity taught them that they would fly straight to heaven and to a plushy seat somewhere in the centre of things if they gave all their money to the poor. But they didn't do it. Now, Why? And generosity on rather a lesser scale wasn't even practised very much, though to me my grandmother was always lavishness itself. She had what was known in those days as 'a district', a slummy section of the town which housed needy families to whom she dutifully went once a week with advice, soup, and flannel (in the woollen sense). The poor, thus honoured, must have found her sadly patronising. She spoke, of course, of the advantages, not immediately apparent to her audience, of church-going. She returned home with what we then called 'a nervous headache' and lay, full of aspirin, flat on her bed. I used to imagine that the nervous part of her ailment might be the fear that one day they would lynch her – an undeserved fate.

The second shock was to find out how totally ineffective prayer seemed to be. It wasn't merely that selfish requests for chocs and a new halma set went, quite rightly, unanswered. It was the fact that the pleas ('. . .and make me a good little boy. Amen') for moral improvement met with an equally chilly response. There were two very regrettable episodes. Before going to my prep school on the Hampshire coast, I was being groomed for this seat of learning at Miss Wright's kindergarten overlooking Barnes Common. It was a mixed school and I had struck up a warm friendship with a small girl called Mary White (we had recited Kipling for a wartime charity concert in the town hall and this formed a bond. Old pro's together, don't you know). I had started biting my nails and, having temporarily come to the end of them, as it were, Mary very kindly suggested that I move on to hers. So we repaired to Miss Wright's lavatory, sat down on the seat and, after Mary had proffered a pink hand, I took a hearty bite, upon which she let out a loud and disloyal scream. Miss Wright, alerted by the din and displeased at the unconventional goings-on, demanded explanations and reported the affair to my parents and there were sad, reproachful looks for some time.

But I could do worse than nails and I then moved smoothly on to smutty talk. We had started to learn French. At home, the phrase *la pièce de résistance* was much used by my father and usually applied to some particularly attractive dish at a dinner-party. Suddenly inspired, I told Mary that I thought *la pièce de résistance* must be the French for constipation. Was there ever such wit? We were, alas, caught sniggering in a corner. More explanations. More sad looks. And from then on, it's been downhill all the way.

Roger Woddis

World of his own

The chief defect of Billy Barge
Was thinking he was still in charge:
He found it hard to understand
That he had lost the upper hand
And why, when there was Uncle Jim,
His colleagues were pissed off with him.
He only knew that time was when
He ran the show at Number Ten,
But quite forgot the miners who
Had told him plainly what to do.
His ego was of such a size
He sadly failed to realise
That whom the gods would see destroyed
They first of all make paranoid
And thus, though feeling slightly ill,
He managed, through sheer strength of will,
With knitted brow, some plain, some purled,
To bare his heart on *Weekend World*
And demonstrate for all too see
His boundless love for Mrs T.
Alas, his reason cracked at last,
Until, still living in the past,
Still talking to himself on pay,
They carted Billy Barge away.

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Letters to the Editor

For and against an incomes policy

Sir, Your leading article, (NS 20 October) 'There is no incomes policy' was both interesting and pertinent and rather more sensible than Paul Foot's comment on the Ford dispute ('I hope the workers win it all'.).

Isn't it rather strange that 78 years after the birth of the Labour Party many leaders of the trade union movement have more in common with Mrs Thatcher and her acolytes than with the ideals of Robert Owen, Keir Hardie and Nye Bevan. How sad it is to hear people like Len Murray, Alan Fisher, Joe Gormley and Clive Jenkins preach that might is right, that the Unions with real power (and little responsibility) will either blackmail their way to enormous inflationary settlements or bluff their way to the same goal through offering dishonest or dubious productivity deals.

One day we as a society will have to decide what each should receive. Is a professional footballer worth so much more than a nurse? Is a skilled farm worker worth so much less than the men who print our newspapers? Perhaps it is time some of our trade union leaders sat down quietly and thought about the realities of free collective bargaining. Or perhaps they should pause and wonder why they have so much in common with the current leader of the Conservative Party. Or perhaps they should just read Robert Blatchford who wrote in *The Clarion* at the time when the Labour Party was being born, 'We cannot have socialism without Socialists'.

EDWARD P. WILMOT

Harbinger
Derrystone
Barham, Canterbury

Sir, I'm sure we all like – I do, anyway – the 'new, improved' NEW STATESMAN, made important again by the shedding of the somewhat casual cheerily cynical style of recent years. The pendulum swing that now has to be avoided is a tendency to a kind of sourness, compounded by a *Labour Weekly*-style lashing-out at stereotype targets of the Left: the kind of thing that appeals to our prejudices rather than to one's intelligence.

For example, the first page leader of NS, 20 October, refers to incomes policies which, you write, are virtually 'wage freezes cobbled together at midnight to placate foreign creditors . . .'. It does our Party no good at all – especially when the so often forgotten electorate may be watching – to draw, yet again, people's attention to the arrogance of a certain type of socialist – shall we call him 'Bolsover Man'? – with his crude mindless hostility to creators of wealth: that is, the initiators, not those just carrying out a skilled job.

To the extent that some of our Party members study economics at all they appear to belong to the Manna-from-heaven school, good (in their theory) at distributing wealth, careless about how it is to be come by, and actually capitalistic in their devil-take-the-hindmost 'free collective bargaining' demands.

Belly-feeding, guaranteed roof (of a kind) over head, even a regular job (with a strictly welfare-only union subservient to the State) might be O.K. for subsistence-living East European peasants (or from anywhere else), but the British working man, with his 'Escort' and annual Ibiza holiday, sees no acceptable future in Clause IV socialism (a con name for Communism), and with its inevitable end, because all power will then reside in the State, to bargaining, free, collective, or any other kind.

'Placating foreign creditors', you scoff. We would be materially in some pickle if we ignored them. What would you like? For Britain to become an off-shore Cuba, supported by you know who? (No country, now, can live off itself.)

Are you going to growl 'Better that than by bloody Yanks'? If you think so, would you care to come clean and say so – openly, on the First Page?

N. RATCLIFFE

5 Cavendish Avenue
Buxton, Derbyshire

Sir, You rightly say (NS 20 October) that the Labour Government needs to develop its incomes policy into one applying fairly to all incomes if it is to be acceptable to trade unionists; but the problem is how to do this within the context of a capitalist economy.

The Labour Government has often pointed out that profits are needed to finance investment and save jobs. Temporary controls over dividends mean little to trade unionists because they know that profits simply accumulate on behalf of shareholders. As the Labour Government has repeatedly said that an incomes policy is likely to be needed for many years to come it is inconsistent of it to suggest that it may be possible for it to abandon controls over dividends next July. But if temporary controls over dividends mean little the permanent limitation of the return as well as the liability of the shareholder would change the whole basis of industrial ownership. The Labour Pary promised in 1969 in *Agenda for a Generation* to examine various proposals for the statutory limitation of dividends; but its 1974 report on company law had nothing to say about dividends or about 'the most equitable distribution that may be possible' of company earnings. Why? The TUC promised in 1973 to study the case for the permanent limitation of dividends but appears to have done nothing. Why? The Labour Party had been committed by its constitution for the last 60 years to the replacement of capitalist ownership by 'common ownership' right through industry; but it has never even bothered to produce a discussion pamphlet on the implications of Clause Four of its constitution. Why?

If the Labour Party identifies socialism with the ultimate nationalisation of everything it should say so. If not it should pay more attention to ways and means of *socialising* those enterprises that it does not propose to nationalise, that is extend social ownership by a wider application of co-operative basis. The replacement of capitalist ownership by common ownership would obviously make a crucially important contribution to the development of an incomes policy applying fairly to all incomes because trade unionists would no longer assume that restraint on their part would increase the profits of shareholders.

PAUL DERRICK

30 Wandsworth Bridge Road
London SW6

Sir, I consider your editorial of 20 October 'There is no incomes policy' ignores the basic problem which is low productivity.

Trade unionists will usually say it is all due to low investment but in some modern industries there is little evidence to support this claim. Often figures are quoted which endeavour to illustrate that the British worker has only half the amount of capital behind him compared with Germany and Japan but this ignores the fact that it takes twice as many man hours to produce an article in Britain compared with the more advanced industrial countries. I doubt if the answer is to be found here. What is needed is better utilisation of the assets we possess.

Without some determined attack on the problem of overmanning the nation is getting relatively poorer and, if nothing is done, we shall soon be one of the poorer nations of the world with a ready made recipe for totalitarian government and reduced social services.

A. W. COLE

8 Romans Way
Writtle, Chelmsford

For Camp David

Sir, The discipline imposed on the media during the confidential Camp David talks and their apparent ready acceptance of this discipline no doubt contributed to the slow, painful, but positive step forward in the inevitably long and difficult negotiations for peace. It has taken you four weeks to comment on these remarkable negotiations. This has surprised me as doubtless it has done many of your readers and I search for an explanation. And for an explanation of your failure to welcome the talks, and now the direct negotiations, albeit still fraught with the possibility of breakdown.

If peace between Israel and Egypt results from these talks, two of the major countries in the Middle East will as a result be free to devote fewer of their resources to war and more to the needs of their peoples, surely this should be welcomed. If the only parliamentary democracy with a strong social democratic core in the Middle East is freed from the burden of devoting nearly 50 per cent of its Gross National Product to defence, some encouragement from the NS is surely not untoward: something more than the mean article by Ian Black. (NS 20 October.)

Sadat and Begin can only negotiate and settle issues between Egypt and Israel. Do you advocate that negotiations should only commence when all the Arab Countries who, in 1948, in defiance of the UN resolution, invaded Palestine in a great land grab? For this we would wait as long as we have waited for peace in Northern Ireland.

You know well enough that the Middle East lives with a series of problems that are independent of Israel. We must look elsewhere for the causes of these tensions. Your correspondent in a series of incomplete and snide remarks at one stage describes Sadat as 'the liquidator of Nasserism' who 'has sold out to the imperialists'. But it was he who also threw the Russians out. Russia's malevolent ambitions in the Middle East are but one of the main causes of unrest in that area.

All these problems cannot be settled at one set of negotiations. The gradualism implicit in the Egypt/Israel negotiations is not the only possible route: it is the only practical and realistic one. And the NS should be more positive about it. I am not alone in wondering why it is not.

ANSEL Z. HARRIS

15 Lichfield Road
Kew Gardens
Surrey

Sir, For eighteen centuries the Jewish People were an outcast nation who were despised and insulted by other races. Then after one third of them had been wiped out, the Jews in an act of desperation established their national independence. The World was furious that the outcast race should thus make itself equal to other nations, but because of the fear of association with a crime so monstrous as the Holocaust, for a generation opposition was muted. Once that generation had passed The World took action: the United Nations declared that for the Jews to have a national state of their own, was an act of racism. In the West this UN resolution was felt to be rather crude and was formally opposed. More subtle methods were required. The best method was found to be the selection of individual Israeli policies, of a type carried out in most democratic non-racist countries, and present them with a racist slant.

This policy is excellently exemplified in Ian Black's 'Arab Labour in Israel' (NS 29 September) where he takes the fact that Israel issues permits controlling the movement of 'Guest workers' from what is still occupied enemy territory, and declares that this shows that Israel is moving towards a South African style pass system. He carefully leaves out of account that the Arabs concerned are enemy nationals, and these rules do not apply to Israel's own Arab citizens, who sit in the Parliament, who can move freely amongst their Jewish fellow Israelis, and that Arabic is an official language of

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the state. Peace is now coming to the Middle East. Is it not time to accept that an independent Jewish State is going to be a permanent feature of the region?

DAVID M. JACOBS

23 Worley Road
St Albans, Herts

Foot v Hitchens (cont.)

Sir, I am writing to tell you that I thoroughly enjoyed Michael Foot's reply to Christopher Hitchens (NS 6 and 13 October). First of all, I don't think you scored by printing extracts from Foot's 1968 Conference Speech. I am not suggesting that Michael Foot has dramatically changed his views since 1968, but even if he has, what is wrong with a man changing his views?

I also fail to see what was wrong in being 'one of Lord Beaverbrook's closest associates and one of his greatest admirers too.' I can assure your readers that Mr Foot was not Beaverbrook's only admirer. Mr James Maxton MP, ILP Chairman, had a high regard for Beaverbrook. I think Beaverbrook's Empire Crusade – supported by the then prominent Scottish Nationalist, John MacCormick (I shared an Empire Crusade platform with MacCormick at Elgin) – was a commendable one. Unfortunately the fifth-columists and Empire-wreckers in England – and we still have them with us – were at the time too strong for Beaverbrook. By managing our aircraft production during the war the way he did, Lord Beaverbrook make a handsome contribution to the defeat of the Nazis.

In conclusion, do not get me wrong, I beseech you. I have no objection to a small man criticising a big one, so long as he knows his place. As a historical figure nobody would compare Hitchens with Beaverbrook: and who will quote in 1988 anything Hitchens has written in 1978?

W. WEIR GILMOUR

7 Mentone Avenue
Edinburgh

Sir, I suspect that most of your readers will make a short and simple comment on the dispute between Michael Foot and Christopher Hitchens. A plaguc o' both their houses!

NICOLAS WALTER

134 Northumberland Road
Harrow
Middlesex

Wrong whey

Sir, Arthur Marshall (NS 13 October) is wrong: it was junket, not yoghourt, which Miss Muffet pioneered.

ELIZABETH ASHWORTH

1 Bryn Teg Penybryn
Llanfairfechan
Gwynedd

Miller's nerve

Sir, It is curious that the style of 'mimicking originality' which your reviewer, J. G. Ballard rightly ascribes to Jonathan Miller's *The Body in Question* was the very attitude which, in his days as a comedian, Dr Miller so effectively satirised. I remember a very funny sketch about the export of clocks which would soon, in far off places, be telling such well known times as half past six and a quarter to three.

After I had encountered the pretentious opening sentence, which Mr Ballard quoted, only morbid curiosity made me read the extracts serialised (I wonder why) in the *Guardian*. What concerns me, as one who has studied anatomy and physiology for longer even than either Dr Miller or Mr Ballard, is the misrepresentation of fact.

A very significant example is Miller's description of nerve fibres from the skin as passing – all of them apparently – to the sensory area of the cerebral cortex. In fact no fibres pass directly from any sense organ to the cortex. All terminate at a relay centre in either the mid brain or the brain stem. At these lower level centres there is active inhibition and selection from above of incoming sensory impulses. What gets through to the cortex, what is perceived, depends upon interest, attention, and on what has previously been perceived. To a large degree we see what we are watching and hear what we are listening to.

Miller's fictitious anatomy makes no provision for this. It is the analogue of what Popper calls the bucket theory of the mind, the idea that perceptions passively accumulate there. It substitutes a nineteenth century mechanistic reflexology for the fact that perception is an active process.

ROGER JAMES

9 Eastern Villas Road
Southsea

Work

Sir, I do not dissent from some of Frank Field's reservations about the type of measures which may be introduced to meet the Prime Minister's declaration of some kind of short-term hope for the long-term unemployed (NS 13 October). In particular, I would support his call for equality of treatment within the Social Security system for the long-term unemployed. The current arrangements are a reflection of the worst forms of prejudice, i.e. they connive to make us believe that the long-term unemployed are jobless because of some fault or design of their own. The truth of the matter is that, even based on the most favourable view of the current job vacancy figures, if every job available was matched by a suitable worker in the right place at the right time, there still would be a very substantial number of long-term unemployed.

Frank Field's points about the age distribution of long-term unemployment are, however, a little misleading. Approximately 40 per cent of long-term unemployed males (over 26 weeks unemployed) are under 25 years of age, and 57 per cent of long-term unemployed females are under 25 years of age. But, the Prime Minister's intention to introduce some short-term measures to alleviate the problem should command our support. Surely people have a right to expect something more than income maintenance from the State? At the moment, the problem of unemployment is not resolved by paying some people to stay out of the labour market, and the State ought to accept the responsibility of being the employer in the last resort, i.e. offering people the opportunity to work.

Our criticism of the proposal is that it takes place in a vacuum: there is no long-term strategy for dealing with unemployment. Or have we given up the Beveridge declaration of full employment as decent, well-paid jobs for all who want to work?

CHRIS W. BROOKS

Youthaid
57 Chalton Street
London NW1

Answerkins

Sir, Be doppions and sordumes what they may, one thing is certain: the hellikin is the riotous celebration of the Wild Hunt at the end of every year, when the spirits of the dead have their last fling. The etymology of the word is in doubt: some have proposed the transparent *hell-akin*, whence the redundant French forms *mesnie* or *chasse Helleouin*; but the Italian *Harlequin* directs the mind rather to the original Wild Huntsman, the Erl King. In any case, the German Harlequin is none other than the Hanswurst, and his harlequinade the Possenspiel – that is, the hellikin.

FRANCIS HUXLEY

18 Belsize Park Gardens
London NW3

Asians in the East End

Sir, I am delighted to see that the NS has now roused itself to investigating the growing racism in our communities. Congratulations to Francis Wheen on his fine article (NS 13 October).

A. DRYDEN

20 Fieldwick House
Hackney E9

About Oxford books

Christopher Fry

'Thought this sheep-shearing photo would interest you. Can you find me.' Thus wrote Christopher Fry's mother on a postcard to her sister Ada in July 1906 (she never used punctuation) and gave a title to her son's intimate portrayal of his family. 'This curious, reverse-autobiography', says Norman Shrapnel in *The Guardian*, 'moves backwards into the Victorian past, disengaging the family threads. Disentangling, not reweaving. That, I am confident, explains why so apparently artless a book is so moving.' John Mortimer, writing in the *Sunday Times*, says that **Can You Find Me**, £5.95, 'surpasses all the author's past achievements'.

Ivor Gurney

Behind the name Ivor Gurney lies the tragic story of a composer and poet whose life seemed full of promise but who ended his days in a mental hospital. In **The Ordeal of Ivor Gurney**, Michael Hurd examines his music and poetry, drawing on Gurney's brilliant and amusing letters, and on the extraordinary poems – some of them never before published – that chronicle his descent into madness. 'Anyone who admires Gurney either as a poet or as a composer', writes Samuel Hynes in *The T.L.S.*, has good reason to be grateful to Hurd for what must have been a long and difficult task. And those who don't yet admire Gurney – and they must be far more numerous – could have even more reason for gratitude, for this book may direct them to his works . . . My conviction of Gurney's importance remains firm, strengthened and confirmed by the witness of Hurd's excellent book.' £5.95

The Marxist tradition

Main Currents of Marxism, by Leszek Kolakowski, published yesterday, is a handbook and a thorough survey of the varieties of Marxism. Its three volumes – **The Founders**, **The Golden Age**, and **The Breakdown** – examine the origins of Marxism and its development in the nineteenth century, the doctrines of the leading Marxists in the era of the Second International, and Stalinism and developments since the Russian Revolution. No survey of the doctrines of the Marxist tradition could fail to be controversial, but Professor Kolakowski's treatment is detached and pluralistic, and he does not attempt to identify a pure or essentially Marxist strand in the tradition as a whole. Volume I £7.95; Volumes II and III £8.50 each.

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Motability Debated

Sir, In his article on Motability (NS 20 October), – the charity set up to provide cars for disabled people – Christopher Hird suggests that 'the banks pocket £100 million of tax relief.' This is untrue. The tax relief is being passed on to the disabled drivers. Under the Motability scheme disabled people are able to lease a car on terms which are much more favourable than those available under any other leasing scheme. This is because the banks have provided the finance at favourable interest rates and because the motor manufacturers, the motor dealers and insurance companies, and even in this instance the Treasury, who have forgone the licence duty on the cars, have all contributed.

It is totally misleading to suggest that the scheme in some ways benefits the banks. The banks have little difficulty in making ordinary commercial use of the tax allowances which have been granted to companies in this country by successive governments. In supporting Motability, they are surrendering a substantial part of the benefit they would otherwise have received; instead of the banks receiving this advantage, the disabled get it. The annual amount of profit forgone by the banks in favour of Motability and the disabled is difficult to quantify, but when the scheme is fully operative it will certainly be well in excess of £1 million – a substantial contribution to a very worthwhile cause.

Christopher Hird also criticises what he implies is an improper use of the tax relief for leasing because 'leasing capacity is supposed to be used for industrial investment, not consumer spending'. To us it seems reasonable to regard a scheme which promotes the purchase and, therefore, the manufacture of cars for the disabled as fulfilling the purpose of encouraging industrial investment. There are those who argue that all charity should come from private pockets and those who say the State should be the only source. Motability mixes the two in a rather novel way and looks like being successful in providing the disabled with cheap personal transport for which they might otherwise have waited many years.

By denigrating those who are genuinely attempting to help the disable you may discourage others from supporting similar worthy causes.

J. G. QUINTON
Chairman

Motability Finance Ltd
65 Southwark Street
London SE1

Sir, I must make it clear that Christopher Hird's reference to the approval by 'various disablement pressure groups' of the Motability plan, does not apply to the Disability Alliance, a federation of nearly sixty disability organisations. From the start the Alliance has objected to the phasing out of the DHSS vehicle scheme on grounds that disabled people with the lowest incomes would be unlikely to be able to fulfil the terms of any alternative car leasing or hire purchase scheme, and that the scheme would tend to be used by categories of middle income disabled not formerly entitled to, or willing to apply for, a vehicle under the old scheme. The change means that fewer of the poorest disabled people will be able to own, or run, a car. It is strange that Labour Ministers, including David Ennals, Stan Orme, and Alf Morris, should ever have got associated with a plan to phase out the provision of publicly provided and specially designed vehicles for severely disabled poor people, and attempt to justify a mongrel plan which does more for the clearing banks than it does for the disabled.

What is required is a new scheme for disabled drivers and passengers. A free public service can give impetus to good design, economical production and service, and provide the maximum numbers of disabled people with the vehicles they need. Principles of allocation will not be easy to apply but should be made on occupational and social grounds. Secondly, the development of transport aids should be kept independent of the Mobility Allowance, which needs to be developed into the comprehensive Disablement Allowance, graduated according to degree of disablement, which it should have been from the beginning.

PETER TOWNSEND
Chairman

The Disability Alliance
5 Netherall Gardens
London NW3

Sir, Since the Mobility allowance was first mooted I and my present organisation (and before that the Central Council for the Disabled, which is now part of the Royal Association – both organisations concerned only with the welfare of disabled people) have been closely concerned with the optimum utilisation of the allowance to provide independent mobility. Eventually, after considering many different possibilities, a leasing scheme was produced by U.D.T. It was inspired by generous motives on the part of all concerned but it was markedly inferior to the present Motability scheme. It applied only to the British Leyland minis; it made no arrangements for service and maintenance; road fund tax and insurance would have to be paid by the disabled beneficiary; it presupposed a government subsidy of some £6m per annum to meet interest charges. Within the present mobility allowance Motability is able to provide a BL mini completely serviced and maintained. Comprehensive insurance is available at some £65 per annum and as from 1st December no Road Fund Tax will be payable. To that end Motability is a powerful force for it was at their instigation that the removal of Road Fund Tax resolutely refused annually by successive governments was achieved in the Finance Act this year. Above all more costly vehicles from British Leyland and other manufacturers are available providing the recipient pays the additional costs – a facility not available in the earliest proposals. The leasing scheme was introduced at high speed and as a first priority to coincide with the increase in the allowance. Planning for the introduction of a hire purchase scheme is well advanced and if Lord Goodman's working party of which I am a member has decided against such a scheme Mr Hird has information to which I am not party and which will be proved wrong.

I do not think it immodest of me to suggest that I am more aware of disabled people's views of Motability than Mr Hird. They welcome the leasing scheme as a valuable first step towards a variety of schemes which will give them the mobility which they need to play their part in the community around them. Mr Hird's article is a classic example of uninformed irresponsibility. Its special vice is that Motability as a second limb is assembling a charitable fund to assist further those who have special and peculiar needs which cannot be met under existing circumstances. If his article discourages contributions, disabled people will owe him a special debt.

GEORGE WILSON

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
25 Mortimer Street
London W1

Sir, Your recent article on the Motability Scheme has been warmly welcomed by our organisation and by many others as a contribution to our efforts to get a better scheme that will help those in the low income group. We do not condemn Motability, we congratulate them on taking on such a colossal task; but, like all new schemes there are bound to be anomolies arising. One of the most important of these is the representation of the disabled on the Motability Council of 50. Only four or five on this council are disabled, and we are asking for more.

A very large number of disabled people have never had the chance of working, so how can these people be expected to find the hundreds of pounds to put down before a car is handed over? The invalid three-wheeler was designed and offered to the disabled because of it's simplicity and low running costs. The initial outlay required in the Motability Scheme before a car is handed over, plus any adaptations necessary, and in addition a mileage charge over 10,000 miles, plus driving lessons at £5 per hour, will make the scheme totally impossible for thousands. The Ministers responsible have said many times that the trike will be with us for another four or five years, But, who is going to maintain them when the Approved Repairers decide to close their garage?

We offer our grateful thanks to Mr Christopher Hird for the publicity given to our fight to help those who cannot help themselves; and our thanks to the NEW STATESMAN.

HAROLD NEWSOME
Secretary

National Invalid Vehicle
Reprieve Action Group
Huddersfield

*For reasons of space Christopher Hird will reply next week.

KYUNG-WHA CHUNG

'It was London that provided me with my first big opportunity when I made my debut there in 1970. Since then, I have played with almost every British orchestra and I have come to regard Britain as the base for my career. Enormously impressed by the high standard and dedication of British musicians, it saddens me to hear of those who have fallen on hard times, through illness, accident or old age. They have given pleasure to many by their musicmaking, and they deserve to be remembered.'

Please send a donation, large or small. It will help to maintain our three homes of residence for elderly and retired musicians and will give comfort to many who long for your support.

Sir Thomas Armstrong,
Chairman,
MUSICIAN BENEVOLENT FUND,
16 Ogle Street,
London W1P 7LG.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Margaret Drabble

A Woman's Life

A Reflection of the Other Person: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1929-1931 edited by Nigel Nicolson *Hogarth Press* £11.95
Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf by PHYLLIS ROSE *Routledge* £7.95
Leonard Woolf: A Political Biography by DUNCAN WILSON *Hogarth Press* £9.95

Virginia Woolf is the source of much of contemporary feminist thinking, and although she is claimed as an ally by widely differing factions, few would dispute that she is responsible for the terms of the debate on male and female writing, male and female subject matter. The three new additions to the Woolf shelf now under review provoke new reflections on this theme. If there are, as some believe, no essential distinctions to be drawn, it is odd that these offerings should fall so neatly into separate categories.

To take the last first, it would be hard to imagine a more masculine account than Sir Duncan Wilson's of Leonard. The author, it is true, confines himself to Woolf's political beliefs and influence, tracing his interests from his early enthusiasm as a schoolboy at St Paul's for Thucydides, through iconoclastic Cambridge and involvement with the Co-operative movement, to his work on various advisory committees and his growing concern with imperialism and international peace negotiations. As Woolf told his own personal story at length, and in the most lively and human manner, in his volumes of autobiography, there is no cause to regret the absence of such material here; and, as Wilson points out, Woolf's political writing and activity were so copious that even this concentrated analysis is selective rather than complete.

It is an impressive record of hard work and hard thinking, much of it doomed to failure or, at the best, only comparative success: Wilson quotes Woolf's own retrospective view that in 57 years he had 'ground through between 150,000 and 200,000 hours of perfectly useless work'. All those hours of committee work, all those high ideals, whirled away in the indifferent vortex of history – the League of Nations swallowed up in the second world war, the second world war inexorably succeeded by the Cold War, British imperialism crumbling under the relentless advance of American and Soviet imperialism – no wonder enlightenment and rationalism looked back and were depressed.

Political cynicism and laziness are now so widespread that it is melancholy rather than salutary to note that not even the finest efforts of the most diligent of men seemed to make much impression on the course of events. Although, of course, as Wilson reminds us in sadly familiar terms, things could have been worse – without the League of Nations, without the UN, without the Advisory Committee on International Questions and the Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions, without the *Political Quarterly*, the gloom might be even thicker. The advisory role is a thankless one, and the influence for good of such a life is hard to assess; points on the credit side inevitably appear negative. Woolf helped to drag the Labour Party out of its insular attitude to foreign affairs, he very positively altered Britain's colonial policy, he tempered the Left's admiration for the Soviet Union with realism and caution. Is this a small achievement, a small return for those hours spent struggling with dead committee language, cumbersome machinery, opportunist politicians, and concepts of communal psychology? Probably not, but the wide historical perspective within which Wilson writes and Woolf thought make it appear so. Wilson casts doubt on Woolf's capacity for broad philosophic thought, and describes him as a 'simplifying analyst', praising in contrast his campaigning zeal and the power of his 'total character, his personal encounters and friendships'. A mixed epitaph.

It is a relief to turn to his wife's letters and to recall that Leonard had a private life, in many ways a very rich one. Much has been written in praise and blame of his protective attitude to Virginia, and of the real nature of their low-keyed, companionable marriage, but at least it afforded him a change from the 'A.C.Int.Q.' initials which appear with deadly regularity in Wilson's book, and which must have struck a chill in Virginia's avidly personal spirit. She professes impatience with politics; in 1931 she writes to Margaret Llewelyn Davies:

> I can't conceive how you politicans can go on being political. All the summer we had nothing but political arguments . . . so completely silly, futile, petty, personal and unreal . . . if everyone read poetry then there'd be no politics; no crisis; none of this place hunting and party spite.

She accuses Keynes and Woolf of talking personalities, but it is the abstractions, not the personalities, that bored her, and, significantly, when she agrees to write an introduction to Davies's collection of articles by working women, *Life As We Have Known It*, she finds herself in difficulties, causing political offence by her 'personal impressions' and her feminine desire to add 'a more human outlook'. The Women's Guilders, apparently, did not like to be described as weighing, on average, 12 stone, were shocked by the word 'impure', and did not like the image of overflowing ashtrays: 'A little blue cloud of smoke seemed to me aesthetically desirable at that point,' she says, apologetically, and concedes humbly, 'I made too much of the literary side of my interest'. Conciliatory though she is, and generous in her donation of time and effort, at heart such censorship shocks her; moreover, one suspects that her dwelling on weight and ashtrays is an effort to enliven her own lack of interest in worthy but dull material.

She is more at home with the bizarre and the exotic; uncensored malice poured from her pen. She declines to go to the funeral of an old friend of her father's, and says, 'All that remains of her in my mind is a cows black blubbering cunt'; the party-givers whose invitations she accepts are 'wolves and vultures'. Hugh Walpole, who surfaces frequently in this volume, is accused of talking 'dingy dirty literary shop' about reviews and sales, and of dragging 'me in, who am naturally so pure'. Her purity is of a strange quality, for she too was interested in sales and abnormally sensitive to reviews; a deep fear about the success of *The Waves* is followed promptly by an injunction to friends to hang on to the first edition, as it is bound to increase in value. She warns her new friend Ethel Smyth (who appealed to her partly for her bizarre and exotic qualities) of the folly of replying to critics, but her superiority is heroically assumed, rather than real; she fears to appear 'a shallow, egotistical cock crowing creature, to bother what people say of her'.

This is only one of the inner conflicts that approaches danger-point during these years; another is the conflict between the need for solitude and society. A life divided between London and Rodmell seemed to offer a solution, but in practice Rodmell was invaded by unwanted friends and strangers, some of whom are described with the utmost savagery, while the London parties provoke hysterical outbursts; after a party at Lady Rosebery's she writes to Ethel:

> I don't know when I have suffered more . . . I see of course that it is morbid, that it is through this even to me inexplicable susceptibility to some impression suddenly that I approach madness and that end of a drainpipe with a gibbering old man.

Yet she goes on accepting such encounters, to wake in the night torturing herself with remorse. A trivial life, a woman's life, full of gossip and servant troubles, confessions and quarrels, dogs and sanitary towels – punctuated now and then by sober little queries about suicide, illuminated by a dazzling creative intensity.

Phyllis Rose's *Life* is as personal in tone and subject as Wilson's is objective. She writes with considerable insight and feeling of Woolf's attitude to herself as a woman and of the possibility of being a woman writer, ascribing her post-novel breakdowns to guilt at her rejection of the mother image so powerfully embodied (and lost) in the dead Julia Stephen, reincarnated briefly and traumatically in Stella Duckworth, and then presented as a living and constant challenge in Virginia's sister Vanessa, who, by being a painter of talent as well as a mother and a highly sexual woman, deprived Virginia of the neat opposition of Mother-Artist in which she might otherwise have taken refuge. It is a Freudian interpretation, but free of Freudian judgment, for Rose believes that Woolf's defence of herself, her lack of sexuality, her choice of husband, her need for a room of her own, were positive and creative choices, not evasions: she writes excellently and I think with much originality of 'the strategic value of frigidity', exploring it not only in Woolf's life, but also in the lives of her characters – notably, of Mrs Dolloway. She demonstrates that in the years of her success Woolf clung to the sense of being an outsider, indeed even invoked it in despite of circumstance: she felt she worked best when she had her back to the wall.

Feminism needed Woolf, but Woolf also needed feminism: it was, says Rose, 'her only

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true politics', and when her faith in it wavered – under the onslaught of the new politics of the Thirties, with their rejection of Bloomsbury – she lost confidence in herself and her work. The personal battle for balance, which had seemed so important, became insignificant; the woman conceded, inwardly, that the world of men was the real world, or lost the energy to reply. The front pages of the NEW STATESMAN outlived the back, and today politics – feminism, A.C.Int.Q. – have become so polarised that not even a tenuous, tenacious Woolf marriage could wed the two together.

Iris Murdoch

Force Fields

The Virgin in the Garden by A. S. BYATT *Chatto* £5.95

This is a very good book. It is a large, complex, ambitious work, humming with energy and ideas. It is a highly intellectual operation. The characters do a great deal of thinking, and have extremely interesting thoughts which are developed at length. But this is no tract or treatise; it is a strong, confident, very long traditional novel, a remarkable achievement. At a time when some critics doom the novel to brevity, narrowness, dryness and ultimate degeneration into a 'text', Mrs Byatt's lively monster triumphantly exhibits the form as a playground for a powerful omnivorous intelligence.

The scene is set in Yorkshire during Coronation Year, in and around the school of a small town. There are many characters and a complicated and extensive plot. The main line of the tale follows the fortunes of two sisters, Stephanie and Frederica Potter, and their brother Marcus, the children of a bad-tempered, atheistic schoolmaster. Stephanie has lately left, Frederica is soon to enter the university, and Marcus is at school. Stephanie, a teacher, marries a practical, anti-mystical clergyman called Daniel. Frederica hopes to lose her virginity and eventually succeeds. Marcus, unhappily gifted with paranormal powers, becomes the prey of a pietistic crank. Alexander, loved by both sisters, soon to leave the world of school-teaching for that of the London theatre, has written a pageant about the first Queen Elizabeth; much of the drama concerns this project, which reaches a suitably chaotic and glittering climax at the end of the book. The figure of the Virgin Queen hovers ambiguously in the background. There is a very large number of literary allusions.

This is, essentially, a historical novel, but set in a period which never seems remote. There is a good deal of 'social comment', but this is never obtrusive and is subjected to the strong necessities of the story. Irrepressible intellectual interests in a novelist may obstruct the most important part of the task, which is the presentation of character. General reflections may diminish the contingent reality of those who utter them. Mrs Byatt has managed to render her people's thinking both individual and dramatically effective. We are treated, for instance, to a little lecture on Keats's *Grecian Urn*, which might indeed seem to be a foreign body; but, offered to us by Stephanie in a school class, it illustrates her teaching methods and the passionate quality of her intellect. Stephanie's dream also prompts a superb commentary on Book Five of *The Prelude*. Mrs Byatt exhibits a discreet mastery of metaphor in her many excellent descriptions of the *activity* of thinking, its pace and texture. Not many novelists describe this activity as well; and not many novelists have so many interesting thoughts with which to endow their characters. The characters survive their creator's cleverness partly by their own innate energy, and partly through the intense 'internal relations' of the book. Characters in a novel support each other. We are persuaded of the reality of the setting (described in detail) and of the somehow inevitable placing of the centres of force within it.

There are a number of strong and separate centres of force. The sisters, similar but different, with diverging destinies, are surrounded by a number of sturdy, well-studied figures. Daniel, the exponent of 'practical love', reflects painfully upon his religion, and upon the details of settling his bride in a small house on a housing estate. Bill Potter, the bad-tempered father, boycotts Stephanie's wedding (Alexander gives the bride away), and throws a champagne party for Frederica's A-level results. Marcus's experience of the deep structure of the universe is imagined in remarkable and convincing detail. (Indeed the novel may be said to be *about* deep structure.) This *tour de force*, together with the drama of the schoolmaster who (with tragic consequences) treats Marcus as a religious phenomenon, would make a sizeable novel in itself. Alexander is perhaps less fully realised than the other main characters, but we believe in his work and his ambitions as we see the Elizabethan masque taking shape before our eyes.

This long, energetic, poetic book has time for all sorts of surprising, though relevant, diversions and treats. Not only literature but the visual arts come liberally to the author's aid. Marcus offers us a remarkable perceptual analysis of a butcher's shop. An Elizabethan house is described in loving and learned detail. The story is always strong enough to assert itself, and though often impressively sad, is also at times zanily funny, as when Frederica, in search of any old amorous adventure, takes a bus into the country and has an inconclusive encounter in a field with a travelling toy-salesman. And those expressive memorable details are not lacking, which are the mark of the genuine novelist: the 'little gold pins' which Alexander fetches from Stephanie's bedroom when he is helping to fire her for her wedding; the bottles of wine, left by Alexander for the defecting Frederica outside the french window, and subsequently knocked over by Bill.

Of course, there are criticisms to be made. There are things to be said against any novel; it is the most essentially imperfect of all the great forms. There are perhaps too many literary allusions and quotations (though I would not wish that fault undone, the issue of it being so proper). And do schoolmasters really talk so much about Spenser and Milton, rather than talk about their motor cars? Alexander is to my mind not yet a clear enough character for his central place in the tale. I would also have liked to see more work done on the sisters' relation to their brother. I was bothered by the end. Would Frederica really have missed her chance of Alexander so casually? But in the context of such an achievement these are minor considerations. It is good news for the reader that we shall have time to find out more, since this is the first volume of a series. It intriguingly starts with a flash-forward which shows Frederica meeting Daniel and Alexander, both apparently unattached, several years later on. Mrs Byatt has laid extensive and deep foundations in her first volume; the later books are bound to be (and this is saying much) increasingly rewarding.

A. S. Byatt

Worldly Wise

The Realists by C. P. SNOW *Macmillan* £6.95

It is only fair to begin a review of this book with a warning. It is not a book about the nature, workings, values or preoccupations of realistic fiction. This is a pity, since, as critics like Rubin Rubinowitz have shown, C. P. Snow, as a reviewer in the early Fifties, wrote a series of attacks on 'experimental' writing and praise of socially responsible, 'neo-realist' novels which helped to influence both the writing and reading of fiction at that time. If his novels were then over-valued, I believe they are underrated now, because the realistic virtues they display have again become unfashionable. The careful analysis of public behaviour, domestic affections and affiliations, ambition, movements of money, and organisations like the Law or the scientific hierarchy, are not what we are thought to want to read about, unless we are offered them with a touch of irreal nightmare mockery. Snow may, we suspect, not tell us exactly what we want to know about these things, and he may often be wrong, but very few novelists are telling us anything at all. There is room for a study of bureaucracy, or jobs, or heritage that is not presented only as a grotesque phantasmagoria.

So it would have been very interesting if Lord Snow, in treating of his eight chosen realists, had offered us an analysis of how they chose their subject-matter, how they found or created people, places, institutions, and where their techniques are better described by other critical words besides 'realist'. He does not really attempt any of this: his chapters are mannerly little biographical essays, containing judicial summings-up of plots and values of certain great works. His novelists are Balzac, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Galdos, Henry James, Proust, Stendhal and Tolstoy. I found the essays interesting in proportion as I knew less about the writer concerned – which is to say that I only really enjoyed the chapter on Galdos, of whose work I was ignorant, and whom I now want to read.

At the time of the Leavis-Snow controversy over the *Two Cultures*, Lionel Trilling wrote a remarkably acute essay pointing out that for all their differences Snow and Leavis were highly similar – both cultural Roundheads, committed to social and cultural responsibility

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before elegance and wit. He could have added, one now sees, another similarity – a propensity to arrange writers in batting orders as hierarchies of greatness, including some as the very highest, and carefully excluding others, leaving Leavis with the later embarrassment of having been wrong about Dickens. It is a game I suppose all readers like to play – but a game which, I suspect, most serious literary omnivores or people who hope to learn how to write well quickly get tired of playing. Snow doesn't mention Leavis's great hero, Lawrence, but does go into how he nearly excluded Dickens (on the grounds of being 'only realistic occasionally and as it were by courtesy') and does exclude George Eliot, Jane Austen and Trollope on the grounds of insufficient 'stature'. Proust and James are there without any mention of the relations of their works to the 'experimental' writers who were their contemporaries.

The biographies themselves read curiously like novels by Snow: as though Balzac, Proust, Stendhal and Dickens had the qualities and limitations of a Lewis Eliot or a George Passant. The tone is worldly-wise, finally judicious. To choose a passage at random:

> As a rule, Galdos was under better control than Balzac. He was much less extravagant. He didn't lose his sense of fact, which in him was difficult to shift. Balzac knew a great deal. So did Galdos. About individual human beings there wasn't much to choose between them. Each had percipience at full strength . . .

Not much for the reasonably well-informed reader to grip on there? He is wise and final too about the sexual proclivities and energies of his characters, in which he takes more interest than in anything else. He is briskly dismissive of neo-Freudian ideas that Henry James's 'obscure hurt' suffered at eighteen was castration, and briskly dismissive of suggestions that Proust felt any shame about his homosexuality or self-consciousness about his part-Jewishness. In the first case he seems to represent common sense fairly reasonably: in the second his evidence is so scanty that one is left wondering how, against the mass of analysis of vices, homosexual and Jewish, in *A la Recherche*, he could maintain his position without at least arguing his case from the text more closely. Leavis said (though he didn't always behave as though he was capable of it) that literary discussions should move along a series of *yes, but*s. Snow expects the reader to say, 'Yes, of course, how wise.' Sometimes it is possible to do that. Sometimes, as he would write, it is not.

His final conclusion is that his eight novelists have little in common except being nearly all short and fat and uncommonly bad at mathematics. Having studied their sexual force or timidity he does not, as Trilling would have, go on to wonder about Wordworth's definition of the Poet as a man 'possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, who has also thought long and deeply'. He concludes that realism flourishes in untidy, energetic, societies with small, appreciative reading publics and 'hope' – 'both social and individual'. He feels that we possess the first two, but not the last – and indeed, absence of 'hope' is one possible explanation of nightmare mockery and wild humour as prevalent forms. At the end of his book I did feel some envy of his eight for their sense of hope, energy and possibility – but whether that was theirs, or that of their time and place, it is hard to tell.

Jonathan Keates

Humble Pie

Francis of Assisi by LORD LONGFORD *Weidenfeld* £5.95
Longford: A Biographical Portrait by MARY CRAIG *Hodder & Stoughton* £5.95
Margaret, Countess of Jersey by VIOLET POWELL *Heinemann* £5.90

Devotees of *Cold Comfort Farm* will remember Elfine Hawk-Monitor, ethereal daughter of the squirearchy, transmogrified into a *Tatler* siren by the dreadful Flora Poste. One of Elfine's early ambitions was 'to try and be a little bit like St Francis of Assisi'. Flora and her creator are not the only ones to have trembled at the thought. The trouble with saints specifically noted for goodness is that goodness is almost impossible to convey without provoking the cynicism and derision which it implicitly transcends. Illustrations of virtue untempered by frailty make it seem sadly arid, priggish and irksome. True humility is perhaps, by its unique nature, better left unwritten about.

Lord Longford has nevertheless tried, in an earlier book to which this is the putative sequel. His examples there were all Catholic, and the stolid, slightly repulsive zeal of a convert colours the analysis of St Francis's achievement in pronouncements like 'he was a Roman Catholic through and through and he believed with all his heart in the virtue of obedience'. Historians, too, may quail at 'St Francis would have been horrified by all aspects of pornography', a statement with as much validity as suggesting that St Francis would have disliked peanut butter if it had been obtainable in 12th-century Umbria.

Workmanlike if not very inspired, the hagiography is followed by an examination of

This English

Do they drop their aitches in Hereford? Looks like it. Then three more misuses/near-homophones. I have been wanting to nail 'credulity' for some time: not a good quality for a detective to have in abundance, surely. £3 for the first entry; £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The myth that this most complete of the performing arts [opera] is for 'eyebrow' or elitist tastes is being rudely shattered by box office successes. *Hereford Evening News* (Christopher Senior)

☐ The 346 Vietnamese refugees . . . began adjusting to the British way of life with a breakfast of scrambled eggs and coffee, and an impromptu game of football . . . They acquainted themselves creditably in both tests. **David Nicholson-Lord** *The Times* (Mrs J. Pusey)

☐ It is principally about Ms Deneuve . . . re-entering the world with the affection of a teenage son, born in prison, to sustain her. She apparently begat him in the lavatory with a cleaner. **Derek Malcolm** *Guardian* (M. Zoad)

☐ Ustinov is in one way the perfect screen Poirot since his ample screen persona and gratifying natural eccentricity means that he can glide through the part without either a sense of strain or any lack of credulity. **Derek Malcolm** *Guardian* (Keith Norman)

'The helmsman's face shows white through the wheelhouse as *HMS Boxer* and Spike Milligan set off to liberate Italy. Meanwhile at home, Milligan's mother was helping the war effort by praying for the death of Hitler — if he didn't die soon her knees were going to give out.'

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Michael Joseph

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Franciscanism in the modern world, in which the uncharitable may be forgiven for spotting a bald, bespectacled Elfine Hawk-Monitor stalking through the pages in quest of a saint to resemble. Inexactitudes such as the labelling of Renan and Matthew Arnold as 'non-Christians', irrelevant personal asides, ineffable pomposity on abortion and homosexuality, and flabby breast-beating over pacifism create, like so much else he has written, the impression of a haphazard morsel of spiritual autobiography which, by no irony, is less reminiscent of St Augustine or Pope John XXIII than of 'Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners'.

This species of public agony is of course nothing new to the Earl, as Mary Craig's adroitly handled portrait makes clear. Nobody's biography is worth reading unless they are dead. Curiosity provides the sole excuse for the choice of a living figure, with the *caveat emptor* carried in those ominous words 'full co-operation' always found in the acknowledgments. In fact the Pakenhams have co-operated with some zest, most of the eight little Longfords chipping in to offer moments of domestic intimacy to the composite picture. Ranging still wider, the author, admirably thorough, has interviewed parliamentary colleagues, prisoners, journalists and Mary Whitehouse to produce a magnificently cool account of her subject, a generous, convincing and wryly objective assessment.

Throughout she is at pains to connect the latterday Longford, shuffling abstractedly from the Lords to Sidgwick & Jackson or from St Anne's, Soho, to Wormwood Scrubs, with his Edwardian aristocratic background. By making him so recognisably the type of restless, unworldly Etonian, juggling arrogance and self-doubt, she invites us to see him as the fascinated prisoner of his own conscience. Moments such as his resignation as Lord Privy Seal in 1968 or his period as chairman of the Irish National Bank are made to point significantly towards a lifelong failure in reconciling a genuine desire to do good and an overwhelming, almost childish greed for publicity.

'We are the grandchildren of grandpapa,' he had explained to guests at a garden party in 1914. Grandmama was Lady Jersey, a Tory doyenne with literary leanings and a fondness for travel. Another grandchild, Violet Powell, has sketched the outlines of what was, in effect, a life of routine enjoyments undisturbed, during 90 years, by any serious catastrophe. Unlike Mary Craig, she has made no effort to investigate the personality of her subject, satisfied, presumably, that we shall be content with the fact that Lady Jersey, like several thousand others of her generation, visited India, met Bismarck and hobnobbed with Henry James.

Ernest Gellner

The Other Half

Concepts and Categories: Philosophical Essays by ISAIAH BERLIN edited by Henry Hardy with an introduction by Bernard Williams *Hogarth Press* £8.50

Three themes above all are intertwined in this collection of philosophical essays written between 1939 and 1964: liberalism as the stress on the plurality of rival values; the organic nature of social life; and the role of philosophic thought in society. The tensions, perceived or otherwise, between what Sir Isaiah Berlin has to say about these topics, are perhaps the most interesting things about the collection.

> The task of philosophy . . . is to extricate and bring to light the hidden categories and models in terms of which human beings think . . . and then, at a still 'higher' level, to examine the nature of this activity itself . . . If there is is to be any hope of a rational order on earth, of a just appreciation of the many various interests that divide diverse groups . . . it lies in the bringing to light of these models . . . with a view to examining whether they are adequate to their task.

This view is a curious amalgam of the dominant theory of philosophy of the time (the unmasking and neutralising of hidden conceptual models) and of the aspiration to improve the world in a liberal direction. The final phrase presupposes that, somehow or other, we can recognise what is conceptually adequate, while the reference to the diversity of groups and interests conveys an acute sense of the complexity of social and historical options. The volume ends with an eloquent and ironic formulation of it:

> The optimistic view . . . that all good things must be compatible . . . is not self-evidently true . . . Indeed, it is perhaps one of the least plausible beliefs ever entertained by profound and influential thinkers.

Indeed. But if ultimate values are irresolubly plural – a conviction which pervades Berlin's thought – then just how do we tell whether conceptual models are or are not adequate for their task? *Which* task? Serving *which* value? How does liberal pluralism make an exception on its own behalf and sit in judgment on monistic beliefs?

The first weakness in Berlin's thought is the lack of a really determined effort to grapple with this. Bernard Williams, in a genuinely useful and illuminating introduction, presumably senses this, for he amiably offers a solution:

> Liberal society . . . expresses more than any other . . . a true understanding of the pluralistic nature of values. But . . . what truth is known to someone who recognises the ultimate plurality of values? . . . What we understand is a truth about human nature as it has been revealed – revealed in the only way in which it could be revealed, historically.

So history has spoken (*qui est donc cette dame?*), in a situation in which she alone may speak, and she lets us have it straight from the shoulder. Those subject to monistic error should read history on this view, which also assumes, at a kind of meta-level, a unique human nature expressed best or exclusively through pluralism. He who would deny this is accused of evasion. Thus, though a hundred flowers may bloom, there is but one gardener. There is a piquant irony about this attempt to turn the table on historicism, and use the Verdict of History to establish exactly the opposite from what it is customarily wont to prove. Does History really speak so clearly?

The second problem which is not adequately pursued arises from the tension between the liberal pluralism and his much stressed sense of the unity of cultures:

> The *Wirkungszusammenhang*, the general structure or pattern of experience . . . is absolutely indispensable to the historian . . . unless he conveys . . . a perception of a social *Gestalt* . . . the result is not recognised by us as an account of reality . . . or what human beings . . . could have felt or done.

The idea that socio-cultural *Gestalt* is so crucial normally goes hand in hand with a holistic ethic, the idea that the good life consists of a congruence between external institutions and the inner life. Recently Berlin's present professorial successor, Charles Taylor, identified the discovery and/or requirement of such congruence, under the name of *expressivism*, as Hegel's gift to mankind.

Now as it happens I am on Berlin's side on this point: the idea of inner/outer fit seems to me questionable, whether as fact or ideal. But if Berlin defies the usual elective affinity of ideas, it is a pity that he does so without exploring the issue in any depth. How is it that we live within a cultural *Gestalt*, and yet a plurality of incommensurate and unharmonisable options is essential? The question does deserve a much more dogged pursuit. Bryce Gallie's brilliant essay on 'Essentially Contested Concepts' went some way towards illuminating it, but it is not mentioned by Berlin, in whose work the moral pluralism and cultural holism cohabit with disappointing peacefulness. Both are used as sticks with which to beat sociology, and also to justify his turning to the 'history of ideas'.

The 'history of ideas' may seem to its critics a crypto-sociology, based on two pervasive assumptions: 1) ideas, conscious or other, are important in history, and 2) cultures both embody them and have this *Gestalt* or organic quality. Now the trouble with half-truths is, as someone has observed, the *other* half; and the trouble with the history of ideas is that it simply has no tools for even trying to locate the limits of the two halves. Take the organic view of culture: it is paraded as a big discovery, justifying the distinctiveness of the historian's craft and the ineligibility of his material to crude scientistic attempts at generalisation, etc. But every first-year stu-

Poet, critic, scholar

and an excellent lecturer, **Peter Levi** has every attribute expected of Oxford's **Professor of Poetry**. If you are an Oxford MA, give him your vote on Saturday 4 November at the Sheldonian. Of his **Collected Poems 1955-1975** (£5), John Heath-Stubbs wrote in *The Tablet*: 'His is certainly one of the most authentic and original, perhaps one of the few major talents of his generation.'

Peter Levi's other books in print from **Anvil Press Poetry** (69 King George Street, London SE10 8PX) are two collections of poems, **Life is a Platform** (£1.95) and **Death is a Pulpit** (£1.60), an essay on poetry **The Noise Made by Poems** (£3.25) and translations of George Pavlopoulos's poems **The Cellar** (£1.60). His new book of poems **Five Ages** (£3.25) is published on 7 December.

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dent in social anthropology is utterly familiar with this 'discovery', though he also knows it to be a dangerous half-truth: in concrete situations one must be on the look-out for shreds-and-patches as much as for seamless webs.

Berlin is not alone in his pluralism, whether ethical or sociological. A thinker and fellow liberal of the same generation, Raymond Aron, has told us how he reacted to the Durkheimian stress on cohesion and consensus (so parallel to holistic ethics) in a manner strikingly similar to Berlin's choice of pluralism – but he found his way out in the sociologist of the irresoluble conflict of gods, namely Max Weber. One cannot but wonder whether this would not have been an option more fertile than the 'history of ideas'. Liberalism does indeed badly need a powerful restatement: but it needs to be deeper and more determined in its handling of philosophical issues, and yet at the same time more willing and able to look at the *social* constraints on ideas.

This problem brings one back to the very first of the under-exploited (or unexplored) tensions in Berlin's thought: that between the 'unmasking of conceptual models' theory of philosophy, which he drew from the cultural *Zusammenwirkend* pool of the time, and his acute and sincere sense of the irresoluble nature of value conflicts and of their historical variability. Now the conflict between the two ideas could hardly be more profound, and yet it is not pursued at all! Is *the* unique truth available at the end of a course of linguistic analysis, or is it *never* to be had? Those who held that philosophy was about hidden thought-models believed problems could be resolved by attending to the nuances of our language, and some thought (as Bernard Williams recently reported in describing that period) that all would be dissolved in about 50 years; Berlin's superior historical sense told him, rightly, that they could *never* be resolved, because history will continue to be the story of profound options. Such an optimistic philosophy could only have been correct if there was some problemless conceptual baseline, from which only the misunderstanding of our language had removed us. . . Conversely, if history is real, if there neither is nor could be such a baseline, then this philosophy, so dominant then, could not conceivably be true.

Berlin did not endorse it, indeed; but equally, he never spelt out this simple, obvious and blatant conflict between it and even a minimal sense of history. Williams observes in the introduction that 'Linguistic philosophy has not much to say about questions of that sort and turned to other things . . .' That isn't quite strong enough; linguistic philosophy made sense only on the assumption that there *were no such questions*. It *had* to ignore them. Williams suggests that in this period, Berlin kept those questions alive. A harsher judgment would be that he tacitly protected that philosophy from refutation-by-the-appeal-to-history, to social reality, through saying, in effect, that these questions were properly handled in a quite distinct, and somewhat innocuous, rather post-prandial, bavardeur subject, called the history of ideas; so it was quite in order if they evaporated from philosophy proper. If anyone still insisted – are not some problems in philosophy political rather than verbal/conceptual? – this made it possible to reply: ah, but that was in another subject, and besides, the wench is dead . . .

Peter Conrad

Invisible Worm

William Blake: His Life and Work by JACK LINDSAY *Constable* £9.50

Jack Lindsay's study of Blake unites two misconceptions: for him Blake is both a transcendental prophet and a revolutionary polemicist. The terminal gods of Lindsay's book are Nietzsche and Marx, and together they Teutonise the hapless Blake, rearranging his proverbs, lampoons and marginal graffiti into a portentous cosmic dialectic. Lindsay's book by its own admission belongs to the 1920s, when its author was a young man autodidactically assembling a 'world-view, such as it was' from 'Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Blake' and nominating 'the artist, creator of form' as the regenerator of 'a contracting or disintegrating universe'. In a period of jerry-built mythologies like the 1920s, Blake was a natural mentor. Today he seems less salutary. The best contemporary criticism can do in defence of Blake's visionary extrapolations is to treat them as a form of the higher astrology, inventions whose symmetry is nonsensical rather than fearful, and to pardon him (as Auden pleaded on Yeats's behalf) for having on occasion written well.

But for Mr Lindsay Blake remains a philosopher, his work an anticipatory synthesis of Nietzsche's metaphysical self-transformation and Marx's political self-betterment. Like Nietzsche with his exultant Zarathustra, Blake disestablishes god in order to divinise man: 'for Blake God was no more than a Man and the purification or rebirth of the universe was to come about "by an improvement of sensual enjoyment".' Nietzsche similarly turned from the abstinent, pallid Galilean to the libidinal worship of the Greeks. However, Blake's theory of transcendence is not only a spiritual imperative but also a worldly battle-cry. His conviction that 'men must and could and would' (as Mr Lindsay gabblingly puts it) overcome the divisions inflicted on them by their society elects him to 'ultimate kinship . . . with the Marx of the 1844 Manuscripts'.

Blake's muddles are consequently refined into a dialectical alternation between the meditative introversion of the Nietzschean superman and the altruistic rage of the marxist reformer. The 'tragic conflict' in Blake is the contradiction between the private mystical integrity of his vision and his revolutionary need to enlist converts. His creativity can be liberated, Mr Lindsay thinks, only by historical shocks – the American rebellion, the Gordon riots – which 'restore his contact with the masses'. The poems are read as superimpositions of lyrical reverie and 'social protest': the tiger is simultaneously the self-surmounting energy of the superman and the retributive frenzy of the mob storming the Bastille. Sometimes the tension between these motives frays into self-defeat. Mr Lindsay is dismayed by 'Jerusalem', in which the revolutionary's war against Albion is pacified by the mystic's 'long-suffering meekness'. But generally the disparity between Blake's eccentric isolation and his universal pretensions is resolved by means of Hegelian paradox, which allows Mr Lindsay to argue handy-dandily that Blake is free precisely because he is so constrained by necessity, omnipotent because impotent: 'no great poet ever wrote with less of an actual audience, and yet he sees himself as addressing a vaster audience than any previous poet.'

Such an interpretation has its own formulaic consistency, but it can't account for Blake's *imaginative inconsistencies* – the *inequality* between the runic concentration of the songs and the flatulence of the epics, or between feeble images like the tiger, represented by Blake as an innocuous soft toy, and the cabbalistic genius of the designs for *Urizen*. The truth, which Mr Lindsay's enthusiasm obscures, is that Blake is a provincial not a cosmic artist. He self-reliantly patches together a visionary universe from his immediate surroundings, like Mr Lindsay in his youth fabricating a 'world-view' from his reading. The provincial artist is one who believes his own backyard to be a world-centre, and Blake quite literally suffered from this delusion: he and his wife used to sit chubbily naked in their suburban summer-house reading *Paradise Lost* and convinced they were in Eden. Blake's cosmology is a map of London. Golden Square is the redeemed earth; Oxford Street, as he told Southey, a thoroughfare in Jerusalem; Lambeth is the infernal perimeter, 'ruin'd and given to the detestable gods' as Los declares in *Milton;* Felpham is paradise pastorally regained. Blake's angelology is an anagrammatic charade: the name of Los's consort Enitharmon 'contains the letters of Catherine', Blake's wife. What Mr Lindsay admires as 'ingenious thought' is often no more than riddling and doodling.

The literary form of this provincial self-help is the proverb, its pictorial form the caricature. Proverbs are generalisations unable to free themselves from concrete examples,

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anecdotes aspiring to the dignity of concepts. In the first version of 'London', Blake called both the streets and the Thames 'dirty', but when he printed the poem he changed the adjective to 'charter'd', referring, Mr Lindsay says, 'to the chartered companies, the big money-powers, which he sees as owning the city and its people'. The substitution is the making of a proverb and — as a physical detail becomes a moral caption — the generation of an allegory. The pictorial correlative of this idiosyncratic vision, raising actuality into eerie abstraction, is the caricature, which translates political characters and crises into travesties of myth. Gillray, for instance, turns Pitt and a pair of his ministers into Shakespeare's weird sisters interrogating the moon, on which are enfolded the sickle-shaped face of the queen and the bloated shadow of the mad king. Blake spiritualises caricature, just as he allegorises the proverb. Gillray draws monsters; Blake, on the other hand, sketches phantoms, insubstantial emanations like the reptilian Newton or the malevolent apparition of a flea.

Mr Lindsay explains Blake's visions as philosophical formulations. Blake himself justified them in homelier terms, as prosaic truth: 'I see everything I paint in this world,' he wrote to Trusler. By intellectually aggrandising Blake Mr Lindsay has actually diminished him, because he slights that mystical ingenuousness which is Blake's most endearing and perplexing quality.

Valentine Cunningham

Bad News

The Only Child by NELL DUNN *Cape* £3.95
The Illusionist and Other Fictions by GILES GORDON *Harvester* £4.95
A Piece of the Night by MICHELE ROBERTS *Women's Press* £4.95 and £2.25

The Only Child is the most specialised pleader in a week of special fictional cases. Sub-titled *A Simple Story of Heaven and Hell,* it sweats away – in, naturally, a heavily deodorised fashion – at convincing us that the misfortunes visited upon its tiny cast of extremely rich solipsists actually deserve this aggrandising. An uphill, Sisyphean task. Collaborate hard though Nell Dunn does with the anguishes of too-big-spending Esther ('you must have spent an awful lot today, Mum') and her over-privileged son Piers (whose troubles, he at one point moans, go back to having had a Matisse over the cot), this reader still wants to grouch. Let them eat bread!

To be sure, the novel's jumpy progress from islanded Mediterranean remoteness to school in Switzerland, smartest shops in Paris and London, interludes in Venice and the like, is always well-lit. Nell Dunn handles the lurid vignette – father staving in Piers's ribs when he finds him in bed with a school chum, or Esther snuggling into the sack between Piers and his boyfriend, or blood brightly reddening Esther's breasts when Piers sticks her with the lemon-knife – like the connoisseur of the bad she clearly is. She even manages the odd moral flutter. Mainly, however, she simply loves Esther, her detailed smells (Balmain, Vent Vert), her picked-out colours (green shoes, peach petticoat, white kid boots) and wasteful self-indulgence, and only exasperates the moral awareness her occasional twinges of social conscience give rise to.

Giles Gordon specialises bleakly in crafty fiction. His artfulness goes in for the life of art and artists, self-reflexively tonguing the jagged tooth of its own nervy existence. Characteristically, Giles Gordon's strength is short stuff: perhaps he realises that anti-fiction's obsessive self-preening is just dull when it's kept up long. Characteristically, too, there's a story reflecting this liking for next-to-nothingness. The narrator of 'Maestro', distressed by a performance's length ('And the bugger played on') is driven to more than cries and clothes-tearing: 'My sex was disappearing into my arse.' This impressive retreat into defensive circularity is typical of the way these fictions have with themselves. Not only do they tend to be narrowly occupied with story-tellers, musicians, painters, magicians, but they seal off their artists' doings from communion with reality, or the 'world outside' as it's dismissed in 'The Illusionist'. Historians, a narrator suggests, invent history; Dali invents Velasquez; the narrator's letter to Dali is returned unopened – therefore Dali is only a fiction. Similarly, in 'Nineteen Policemen Searching the Solent Shore' a narrator studies a photograph of the back of a crowd of cops, including himself, who are searching for a gun which the murderer – probably the narrator – is holding, unseen, behind them. Arguably a witty move; but, repeated, as clever as an ingrowing toe-nail. And not just because these strategies appear to need a dismal toll of violent deaths, but because they're deliberately turned off by actual, knowable human beings.

As for stereotyped humans, Michele Roberts's first novel comes freighted with enough anti-male prejudice to cancel out at least a decade of the male chauvinist millennia. Julie, a French girl whose name and experience are made to keep harking to Julienne – *la mère soupe,* the vegetables mashed by cooking to satisfy men's bellies – certainly has a rough time between a Catholic upbringing, the Warneford Mental Hospital, marriage to an Oxford don, bearing a child, and discovering she's a lesbian. But her story, sadly, remains a runaway chaos of inchoate bits, an incoherence that slumps well short of the better novel it might with more toil have become. The proneness to packaged liberalism about conservation or communes is much too uninspected. So are the oohings and aahings every time a red flag shows up or a flock of sisters appears on stage. I suppose it's credible that Julie should land herself with a historian who fantasises about wrenching women apart. But then Ms Roberts is too much given to a flatly generalised way with people, and a language that tends to jargon; children play, 'instructing each other on the penalties of upsetting the delicate balance between group and self'.

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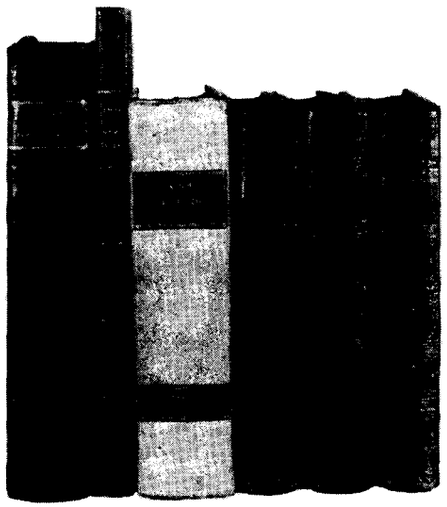

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Elizabeth Jane Howard

Salad Days

Any adult embarking upon a bunch of children's books is bound to feel pangs of nostalgia; the books of one's youth seem imbued with a masterly excellence that no present-day writer can match: and although this may simply be part of romanticised memory in key with those long, hot, golden summers with never a drop of rain that so many of us claim as part of our childhood, the fact is that all parents interested in the subject try at one time or other to get their children to know what *they* used to like. Sometimes that works: the children respond to Richmal Crompton, E. Nesbit, A. A. Milne or Arthur Ransome and a good time is had by all. When children, on the other hand, enthuse to parents about the books written for them today, they are all too often fed the old stuff about standards having gone down, too much trash, etc. We forget that we forget all the books that bored us when we were children, just as the cloudless summer days were embedded in months and years of grey weather. What is difficult about judging children's books if one isn't a child is that one isn't a child.

Looking at these books before I read them, two things struck me; first that not one of them is a full length novel – and a good *long* read was my first consideration when a child – and second that the standard of illustration seems drastically reduced. Out of the eight books, two are really well illustrated, one is well done but in the kind of grown-up way unlikely to appeal to children, two are just about adequate, and two are just barely competent.

The book that most appealed to me was *The Enormous Crocodile* by Roald Dahl, with pictures by Quentin Blake (Cape £2.95). To begin with it is about a wicked Crocodile – an excellent combination; I shouldn't think anybody would be silly enough to write about a good one. He is determined to eat some children for lunch, and sets off from his river full of clever tricks to catch them. Unfortunately for him, he is *completely* wicked and therefore pretty awful to animals too; so, whenever he looks like snaring children into one of his horrible traps, an animal saves them. This is a good racy adventure written by somebody who has the idiom for it. Mr Dahl also understands the symmetry of story-telling that young children *do* like – a kind of near predictability saved from being boring by good, ingenious invention. The book is full of the most satisfactory illustrations – reminding me rather of the famous Babar books. A sure-fire success for anybody under ten, and possibly older.

Thomas Keneally's *Ned Kelly and the City of the Bees* (Cape £3.50) is the adventure of a boy who is visited by a pitying bee and an exceptionally tiny 120-year-old little girl when he is recovering from an operation in hospital. The bee puts a drop of nectar on his lip and once he has swallowed it he becomes small enough to ride on her back. Off he goes and spends a summer with the bees and Miss Nancy Clancey. I enjoyed this story and so, I think, would many children. It is full of detailed and accurate information about the way bees work and live, and this is thoroughly woven into the adventures and not superimposed. The Australian country background also adds extra flavour. Mr Keneally has pitched his language just right: simple, but not too plain, and he writes about children from their point of view so well that I feel sure he has achieved the double of also writing *for* them. This book is a decent length (120 pages), beautifully produced – in general, just right for the child who has mastered reading and has started to enjoy reading a proper book to herself. The illustrations, though good in some ways, do seem to me to be what adults think children like, rather than what they do like, a trap that far too many children's book illustrators fall into.

Our Exploits at West Poley by Thomas Hardy (Oxford £2.50) is a re-issue of the only work that Hardy wrote for the young. It was intended for serialisation in a popular Boston youth magazine, but got lost – turning out to have been published ten years after its original submission in an obscure Boston monthly 'devoted to the interests of the American housewife'. In 1893 the American housewife's interests did not extend to a boys' adventure story or even, apparently, to the famous English novelist who had written it; so the work was forgotten until it was published in a limited edition in 1952. I enjoyed it very much, and I *would* have enjoyed it when I was about 12. It recounts the adventures of two boys who find a stream deep inside a cave in the Mendips, and, by diverting its course, discover that they can order which of two villages shall have water. I suppose Hardy's philosophical preoccupation precluded his writing more for children (given the cast-iron morality required by Victorian parents) and it is interesting that this tale – about the consequences of wilful interference with a natural watercourse – neatly bridges the gap between Hardy's determinism and the establishment view of free will and its moral results. With his knowledge, his capacity to describe practical things as well as to tell a good story, he could, if he had cared to, have been a wonderful writer for children – not least because he would never have written down to them. The illustrations by John Lawrence are excellent.

Two little books by Charles Causley come from Robson at £1.95 each. *Three Heads Made of Gold* is a fairy story on classic lines – a beautiful princess, wicked stepmother with ugly daughter, and the comforting ingredients of magic and predictability that suit children so well. *The Gift of a Lamb* is a verse play about the first Christmas, with music by Vera Gray. I am never very sure about this sort of thing: I don't think children would want to *read* it much, but I suppose they might enjoy acting it. There is a wicked chap called Thieving Jack in it, the only person *I* would want to be, and I have a feeling that most children would agree: the other people are all too good.

A Christmas Card by Paul Theroux (Hamish Hamilton £3.95) is an uneasy blend between a ghost story and a fable – and not nearly unsettling enough to do either genre credit. It also seems to fall between the stools of not quite being a story for adults, and not quite being a story for children. It is about a family driving to their farmhouse on the East coast of America to spend their first Christmas there. They get lost, and spend the night in what they think must be an hotel kept by a

CHILDREN'S CHOICE

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DENT

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mysterious old man. In the morning he has disappeared, but he has left a Christmas card bearing the picture of their house on it, and this enables them to find their way. The card is a magic one, and keeps changing to show them other things. The narrator, a nine-year-old boy, who belies and understands the old man, gets his wish. I think this is a very ambitious *kind* of story – it has to be a masterpiece or it will be in danger of simply having the pretensions of being one. But it has some very good things in it – atmosphere and apt descriptions of weather: it could be something to read aloud round the fire.

Fatlips by Arnold Wesker (Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative £2.95) is about a six-day voyage of emigrants. On board is a strange old man they call Fatlips, who is unfortunately persuaded to reveal his secrets. A quote from Mr Wesker's introduction to *Fatlips* 'Addressed to Children' arrived on a slip of paper in the book.

> *Fatlips* is my first story for young people. Naturally, my primary intention was to tell a story, simply that. But no story can ever be 'simply' told. Jack may plant a bean which he received in exchange for a cow, and it may be exciting that the bean grows into a huge beanstalk; but is Jack fair or dark, gentle or rough, foolish or wise? A story can't help being about good or bad people involved in dull or exciting events. The narration has to reveal these things and in doing so the writer is involved in making judgments. He has to describe, whether he likes it or not, what *he* thinks makes a person good or bad, and what makes an event dull or exciting . . .

I really don't feel that these remarks are calculated to make any child want to read the book; but then neither is the book.

Jeremy Treglown

No-Go Area

Is there a connection between literature and child violence? After a survey of nearly 100 recently-published books for children, carried out during round-the-clock surveillance of a pair of siblings whether together, alone or in group 'friendship' situations, the NEW STATESMAN can reveal that the answer is a terrifying *Yes*. And child violence, here, means violence not only by but to children. Parental frustration, accumulated over even quite a short period of reading new children's books aloud, can and does provoke acts of aggression against persons and property.

EVIDENCE: Within 48 hours of being read Olive Jones's translation of Benjamin Rabier's French 'classic' *Gédéon en Afrique* (Methuen, a ludicrous £5.95), a story full of acts of violence against animals, vividly illustrated and related with ponderous relish ('Freed from his cask Brutus got on to his paws as best he could, and moaned dismally. Drops of blood fell from his nose on to the sand, while his audience, who had no love for the lion, laughed behind his back at his lamentable and humiliating experience'), one of the subjects of the experiment – Sam (5) – deliberately smashed the pane of a french window (N.B. the choice of window-provenance) with a metal watering-can.

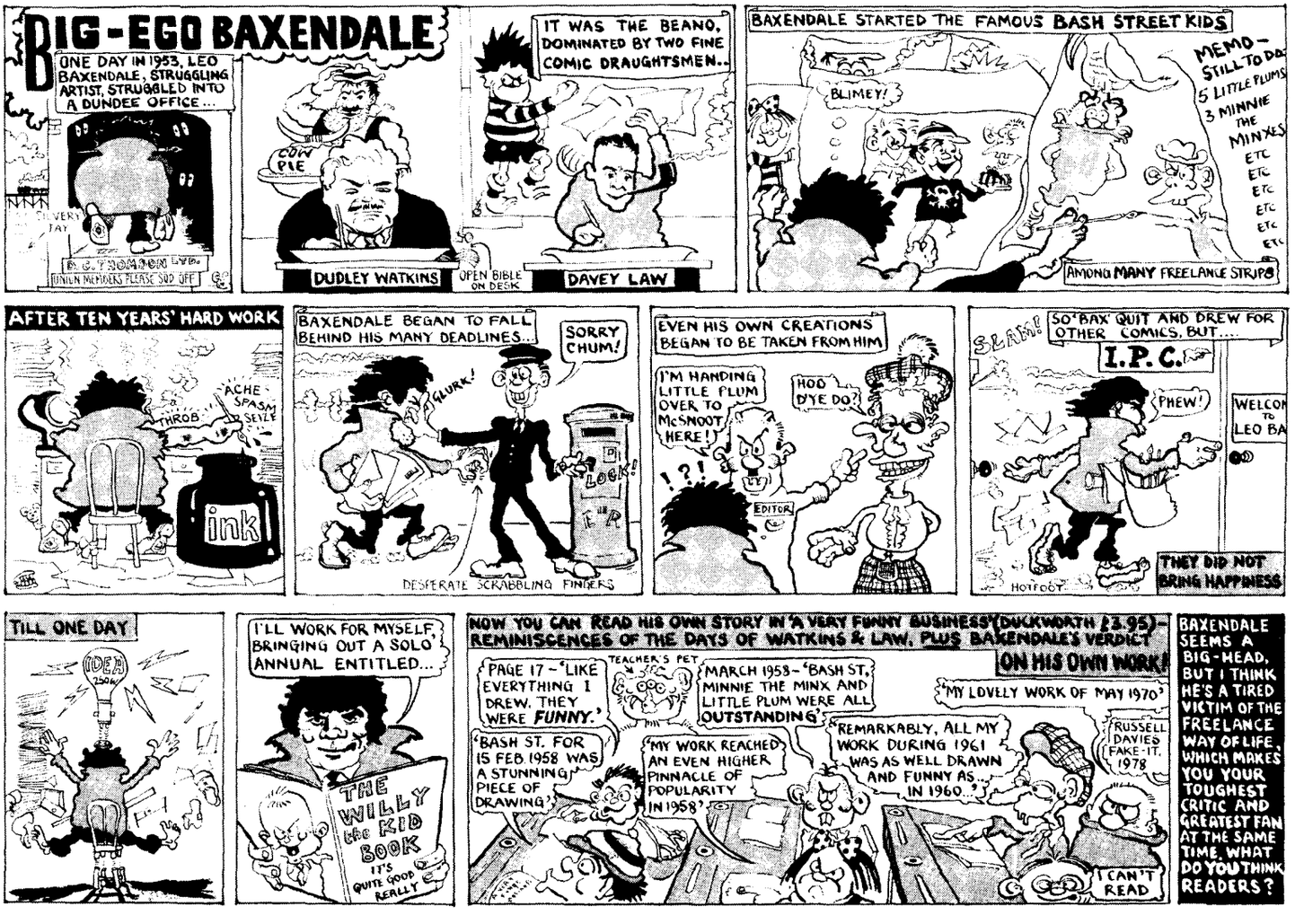
EVIDENCE: One of the 'friends' of the subjects, Oliver (5), himself often placed by his parents in similar reading-aloud contexts, was observed within the period of the experiment hurling books from his bedroom window on to the head of his mother as she fled to her car from the front door below.

EVIDENCE: Forced by one of the subjects, Grace (3), to read each of the Barbapapa First Books (*Counting with Barbapapa*, *Colour and Barbapapa*, *Shape and Barbapapa*, Warne 95p each) twice through at one sitting, her father developed a stammer and some of the symptoms of Trombonist's Mouth (chapped and swollen lips, abrasions of the tongue). Soon afterwards, neighbours were brought to their net curtains by screams coming from the children's home, where the father was seen forcing Grace's feet into a tight pair of Wellington boots, despite her struggles and appeals to passers-by for help. Police soon came to the scene, though the attractive, volatile, ex-actress mother claimed that they were investigating her 'husband's' unpaid parking fines.

WHAT CAN BE DONE? The NEW STATESMAN recommends:

*1 *More television*. Television is mobile, colourful, informative, hypnotic. It gives parents some peace and children the inertia their growing bodies desperately need.

*2 *Stricter control* over foreign books trying to enter the country. Foreign publications for children have been breeding like rabbits in the already over-crowded, welfare-state-subsidised public libraries. A list of particularly prolific and boring authors from America, Sweden, Germany, Australia, Japan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HOO D'YE DO?
!?!
EDITOR
SLAM!
SO BAX QUIT AND DREW FOR OTHER COMICS, BUT...
I.P.C.
PHEW!
WELCOME TO LEO BA
HOTFOOT
THEY DID NOT BRING HAPPINESS
TILL ONE DAY
IDEA
I'LL WORK FOR MYSELF, BRINGING OUT A SOLO ANNUAL ENTITLED...
THE WILLY the KID BOOK
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PAGE 17 – 'LIKE EVERYTHING I DREW, THEY WERE FUNNY.'
TEACHER'S PET
MARCH 1953 – 'BASH ST, MINNIE THE MINX AND LITTLE PLUM WERE ALL OUTSTANDING'
'MY LOVELY WORK OF MAY 1970'
'BASH ST. FOR 15 FEB 1958 WAS A STUNNING PIECE OF DRAWING'
'MY WORK REACHED AN EVEN HIGHER PINNACLE OF POPULARITY IN 1958'
'REMARKABLY, ALL MY WORK DURING 1961 WAS AS WELL DRAWN AND FUNNY AS... IN 1960.'
RUSSELL DAVIES FAKE-IT. 1978
I CAN'T READ
BAXENDALE SEEMS A BIG-HEAD, BUT I THINK HE'S A TIRED VICTIM OF THE FREELANCE WAY OF LIFE, WHICH MAKES YOU YOUR TOUGHEST CRITIC AND GREATEST FAN AT THE SAME TIME. WHAT DO YOU THINK READERS?

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and other foreign countries has been sent to the Public Prosecutor. We recommend that exceptional visas should, however, be issued to some authors, including Jozef Wilkon, whose *Little Tom and the Big Cats* (Dent £2.95) is very well illustrated and simply told, and Chizuko Kuratomi and Kozo Kakimoto, author and illustrator of the Mr Bear Books, including a new one, *Mr Bear's Meal* (Macdonald and Jane's £3.25).

*3 *Encouragement* for authors and illustrators of extremely funny, surprising and/or beautiful books for children. We have decided to ask someone to put his money where our mouth is by awarding the Earl of Grosvenor the opportunity to give a prize of £1,000,000 whenever he likes to Margaret Mahy and Quentin Blake, author and illustrator of *The Great Piratical Rumbustification* and *The Librarian and the Robbers*, published together by Dent at £2.95. The first story is about a pirate who is sent along by a baby-sitting agency:

> Mr Terrapin opened the door and peered out.
> 'Mr Clinker?' he asked politely
> 'What's left of him, matey,' growled a terrible voice. The baby-sitter shouldered Mr Terrapin roughly to one side and stumped into the kitchen.

The other is about a librarian who falls in love with a brigand, who helps to rescue her when the library is buried by an earthquake. Like the pirate story it's very enjoyable for children (of say four or five and upwards) and full of good jokes for adults ('Robbers and councillors, working together like brothers, were . . . reshelving the fallen books').

Stella Farris is recommended for the second prize, a night with the NS reviewer of her choice, for *The Magic Castle* and *The Magic Bubble-Pipe* (Chatto £1.50 each). Both books are full of very good pop-up (or, as children know them, 'rip-up') pictures of the kind public libraries tend to avoid. The castle story is the more exciting – ideal for three-to-five year-olds.

There are a few other good books, including some from well-known authors. John S. Goodall, who does wordless picture books full of water-colours of English life and specialises in interleaved half-pages which change the whole picture when turned, has brought out two new ones. *The Story of an English Village* (Macmillan £2.95) is a good piece of visual social history of this nostalgic kind, tiresomely pessimistic about the 20th century but otherwise a fascinating and attractive spot-the-difference pictorial narrative. His *An Edwardian Holiday* (Macmillan £2.50) is more precious and less interesting. Charles Keeping's *Miss Emily and the Bird of Make-Believe* (Hutchinson £3.50) is beautifully illustrated but rather hard on its decrepit, enterprising tramp-conman character who lives in a basement and paints sparrows bright colours, selling them as canaries, etc., to pay the bills. He gets his come-uppance from the sparrow-loving Miss Emily, who is plainly living on an index-linked Civil Service pension and doesn't deserve to be quite so thoughtlessly victorious at the end. There's a nicer old lady in Chloë Keef's *Great Aunt Homily* (Warne £2.95), who knits jerseys for zoo animals, enabling them to escape in disguise. And another animal story that goes down well is *Oliver Ostrich* by Sheila Lavelle and Nita Sowter (A & C Black £1.95).

As usual, there are also plenty of books suggesting what children might be doing if they weren't sitting around reading books about what they could be doing. They are

New Oxford Children's Books

Our Exploits at West Poley
Thomas Hardy
new illustrations by John Lawrence

Written specifically for a young audience, this story is set in Hardy's Outer Wessex, and the rural life and characters, though lightly sketched, are simple and timeless, in the fashion of so much that he wrote. £2.50

Getting Free
Nigel Hinton

Mr Hinton treats the journey into adulthood with insight and understanding as he tells the story of two teenage lovers and their struggle to live their own life. £3.25

Egyptian and Sudanese Folk-Tales
Helen Mitchnik
illustrated by Eric Fraser

The stories in this latest addition to the *Oxford Myths and Legends* series provide a fascinating portrait of a culture, social morality, and sense of humour quite different from our own. £3.50

Fox Farm
Eileen Dunlop

Abandoned by his parents, Adam lives with a foster-family on a croft in Scotland. Through a growing friendship with his foster-brother, and the children's love of a fox cub, Adam finally comes to terms with his situation. £2.95

A Kind of Wild Justice
Bernard Ashley

Set in the East End of London, Bernard Ashley's new novel is a fast and exciting thriller about how young Ronnie Webster overcomes his fear and helps bring the Bradshaw Brothers to justice. £2.95

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intended for older children than our subjects, who therefore liked them very much indeed. The excellent Practical Puffin series (*Exploring, Constructions*, etc., £1.50 – Kestrel – and 60p) is full of suggestions about how to turn your garden into a miniature Green Jackets exercise range, rip up your mother's tights to make amusing falsies, spend the night on the roof watching bats, and so on. Unnerving stuff for parents, but the suggestions are mostly in fact extremely practical, flexible and clearly presented. I've already learned how to make myself a tree shelter, for when the house becomes a no-go area.

Alan Ryan

Spook Plugs

The long, rough winter which Mr Callaghan has offered us all seems to be prefigured in more than one recent novel for older children. Rosemary Harris's *A Quest for Orion* (Faber £4.50) is among the best of them. It looks forward to the end of the century when Europe has been thoroughly enslaved by the 'Free Association of Kindred States and Nations' – or Freaks for short – and Britain has become nothing more than a repository of slave labour. Against this sombre background, odd groups of people carry on a more or less hopeless resistance to the Freaks in the name of assorted emotions and ideals. Mere inability to conform to any rules at all drives some, and the tradition of the Teutonic Knights drives others. It comes out as a persuasive story of courage and cowardice, loyalty and treachery; the science fiction trappings, with their hint of protective forces way out in Orion, lend a distinctive flavour to the story without swamping it. It is, of course, a strikingly conservative fantasy none the less; it is the sleeping spirit of Charlemagne which will – at least I hope so, but we have to wait for the second volume to be sure – emerge to drive the Freaks from Europe; the Freaks are described as 'neo-Stalinists', although, on a more complex ideological view, their unabashed inegalitarianism is a good deal more characteristic of neo-Nazis; and Britain's inability to fight the Freaks is firmly set down to the industrial conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s.

A less immediately recognisable variety of authoritarian government sets the background for Jan Mark's *The Ennead* (Kestrel £3.50) – namely, the government which looks after a little planet called Erato in a nine-planet system quite like, but not quite like, our own. The way in which the doings of these characters gradually turn out to be a small rerun of the better Old Testament is a constant source of pleasure. I can't altogether believe that any but rather well-taught children of at least 14 will take to it, but those who do will like it a lot.

No doubt at all about the instant readability of two science fiction treats. Tanith Lee's *The Castle of Dark* (Macmillan £3.95) is well up to her usual standard. She has a gift for making the spooky seem part of everyday life without thereby making it any less spooky. She also has a talent for conveying a sort of cosmic kindness; here, although the 'Dark' of the title is regarded by almost her whole cast as pure evil, it appears to Miss Lee's hero as something alarming and uncontrollable but actually more baffled than malignant. I'm not sure what the attraction is of the idea that human kindness can ease the struggles of dark, impersonal forces, but whatever it is Tanith Lee catches it well. *The Final Correction* by Sam McBratney (Abelard £3.25) is equally good value; what it forgoes in the way of atmosphere it picks up with its curious echoes of 18th-century anthropological speculation. The descendants of juvenile delinquents shipped out from Earth 2,000 years before live in a child's world, cared for by a machine which manifests itself as 'Mother-person' to her/its charges. To keep the human race going, the machine has chosen to keep them in a state of mindless innocence but over the millennia, external dangers have multiplied. Mother-person's final correction to the programme in order to defeat these is to take the risk of allowing one human being to grow up with a memory, a sense of identity and all those dangerous traits which Rousseau long ago picked out as the source of humanity's greatness and misery alike. It's a good adventure story, too, which is more than can be said for Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Among the most successful of the relatively unambitious tales is Helen Cresswell's *Bagthorpes Unlimited* (Faber £3.95). Those who haven't yet met the Bagthorpe family will be glad that they won't meet them anywhere outside the pages of fiction; the only reasonable members of the clan seem to be a strikingly idle dog named Zero, and his equally lethargic owner. The rest wreck cars, breed maggots, and go more or less mad. I suspect that it's a very clever book, too – it combines the knockabout humour of the *Just William* stories with an archly elaborate vocabulary which will surely have giggling 12-year-olds asking what 'dormant proclivities' are, please.

More overtly and less attractively educative in manner is Catherine Storr's *Winter's End* (Macmillan £3.95). The story, of young people on a reading party who find that one of their party is being driven into paranoia by the cold hostile house he has inherited, is well thought out and neatly unfolded. But altogether too much psychological commentary gets into the act: nobody ever casts a glance but its significance is explained, while

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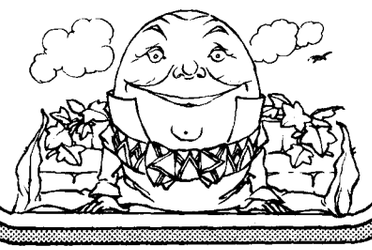

Christopher Reid

The Traveller

First, I plotted my course
by all the wrong clocks of London,
the constellation of friends
whose secrets I alone could read,
hoping by venture to navigate
a route to the heart of the dream.

But you know how every dream
is apt to follow its own course.
I saw the great buses navigate
the capes and inlets of London
and tried in their commerce to read
some *entente* between my friends –

the archipelago of friends
that spattered, in my dream,
a map too dazzling to read.
I was always miles off course,
trusting to currents in London
that only a fool would navigate.

The eldritch gulls, who navigate
with their far-flung friends
the rowdy sea-air above London,
complicated the dream.
They were not lost, of course
(with an open city to read),

but anyone else could read,
in their attempts to navigate
the diplomatic course
of conduct proper to friends,
a wild fear of the dream-
cartography of London.

Undaunted, I travelled through London
and, learning how to read
the prosy flow of the old dream,
I found that I could navigate,
between clocks, buses, gulls, friends,
some kind of a course.

Dear friends, I had hoped in due course
to bring back my dream-map of London
for you to read and to navigate . . .

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the love interest which makes this a novel suitable for young adults rather than preteenies turns into a laborious tale of the importance of kindness and humour in driving away the terrors of first-time sex. Still, the art of letting a message get out, without seeming to try, is not exactly an easy one to acquire. In something of the same mould, but tougher and bleaker and less didactic, is Nigel Hinton's *Getting Free* (Oxford £3.25). This is devoted to the old message of the devotees of authenticity – that freedom lies in the fight against the choking effects of convention, whether or not you actually win that fight or go down under the weight of superior numbers. Perhaps it's not Mr Callaghan's forthcoming winter of discontent that induces so much of a chill; it may be the authentic note of the adolescent imagination.

John Coleman

Wall-Eyed

To go by children's publishers, Dinosaurs Are Forever. Anyway, they lumber into a topping new series of 49″ × 14″ wall-charts, 'Time Lines', researched, written and illustrated by the Diagram Group: *Science and Inventions: 1900 Years of Discoveries, World History Through the Ages: 5,000 Years of the Rise and Fall of Civilisations, Artists, Writers, Musicians: 700 Years of their Lives and Works, The Making of America: 400 Years of the Building of a Nation, Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Life: 3,000 Million Years* and *The Twentieth Century: From Pop Stars to Politicians* (Paddington Press £1.50 each). As a matter of fact, insofar as prehistory may be, there is a lot more than an allurement of dinosaurs to Time Line number five, which is one of the more lucid of these pin-up-and-peruse visual aids. Amaze your friends with the recital of geological eras – Archeozoic, Paleozoic, Mesozoic, Cenozoic, and their various subdivisions: watch their eyes pop as you refer to Pinnipedia (seals, sea lions, walrus) and Lagomorpha (rabbits and hares).

The charts run chronologically from left to right, carry loads of little pictures ranging from fine through quirky to downright barmy, and are colour coded for swifter enlightenment. An insubordinate part of me still revels in comprehensive simplifications, as if one could embrace the tumultuous complexity of the past once and for all with a sauntering eye, and I accordingly recommend this bunch to like-minded optimists. A random sample, for the year 1936 (taken from *The Twentieth Century* spread), might whet uncertain appetites: 'Accession of Edward VIII and abdication to marry divorcée; Spanish Civil War starts; Capture of Addis Ababa by Italians; Olympic Games in Berlin: Jesse Owens wins 4 gold medals; Sergei Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf*; J. M. Keynes, *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*; Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times*'. *O tempora! O mores!*

Such skeletons are there to be fleshed: read the books, listen to the music; study the history. Peter Lane 'is an experienced O and A-level examiner' (jacket) and his *USSR in the Twentieth Century* and *China in the Twentieth Century* (Batsford £3.95) pack plenty of facts in, drawing on commentators of the time, skilfully deploying maps, cartoons and photographs. The *USSR* volume lost me over a full-page reproduction of a *Daily Mail* report of the alleged Zinoviev letter nowhere referred to in Mr Lane's text and several quotes ascribed to 'Serge' – who he? Also, the usefulness of these necessarily sketchy introductions to big subjects would surely be vastly reinforced by lists for further reading. The exam-type questions set at the end of each chapter would produce pretty porous answers if Lane's blandish information were the only source. A similar criticism might be levelled at the well-produced 'World Topics' series of limpbacks, *Minorities, Superpowers, World Religions and Beliefs* and *Human Rights* (Macdonald Educational 85p each), though these – and notably the okay pieties of the first – are spurs to classroom discussion rather than horses to ride solo. Much better is a topical 'Countries Special', *The Common Market* by Paul Armitage (Macdonald Educational £2.50 and £1.50), which has charts galore, is clearly written and tells both children *and* teachers where to look to keep abreast of what's up in the Council of Europe, as much a matter of geography as of history.

Who ever decided the 'disciplines' should be separated in the first place? Nicely setting this arbitrary nonsense (from which I have suffered all my life) to rights come three travelling triumphs, John Vernon's *The First Explorers*, from the Vikings to Magellan, Christopher McCarthy's *Explorers from Britain*, or the Cabots to Captain Cook, and Simon Talbot's *Land Explorers*, Mackenzie of Canada to Scott of the South Pole (all Batsford, £3.75). Again, documents of the periods are copiously and colourfully drawn on.

Which brings me handily back to the present and the thoroughly genial Fact Book series. Marjorie Bilbow's *The Facts about a Feature Film*, the Hammer *To the Devil . . . A Daughter*, Peter Lewis's *The Facts about a Theatre Company*, Toby Robertson's Prospect lot and productions of *Hamlet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Alan Road's *The Facts about an Airline*, 'Featuring British Airways' (Whizzard/Deutsch, £2.50 for Miss Bilbow, £2.25 the gentlemen), are all exemplary inside jobs, entertaining reporting laced with the hard stuff and kitted out with glossaries.

Out-and-abouters and flora-and-fauna spotters should have their own field trips with *The Outdoor Handbook* and Leonard Moore's *The Young Naturalist's Handbook* (Hamlyn £1.95 each), incredible value for money; John B. Free's *Honeybees* and Pat and Helen Clay's *The Dragonfly* (A.&C. Black £1.95 apiece), large-print words to stunning close-up photographs; and *The Children's Book of Animals Around Us* (Usborne £2.95), cats, dogs, and farm animals done proud in this burgeoning publishing house's familiar style, a blend of the hectic, the humorous and the heaven-sent image or notion. Oh, and if you want to know what a googolplex is, or where to find a zedonk, or how New Guineans behaved on first seeing a helicopter (they brought it bananas and peered underneath to find out its sex), for no other reason than I like it hugely, lash out 60p on Bronnie Cunningham's Puffin compilation, *Funny Business*: it is.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Julian Barnes

Above the Belt

One of the main functions of television companies nowadays, you may have noticed, is to act as sophisticated travel clubs for their employees. As Jonathan Miller observed to Michael Parkinson, he often felt, when scripting *The Body in Question,* that you only had to jot down wistfully the name of some exotic locale and the BBC would miraculously transport you there. Nor is this just the case with packages of the Miller/Burke/Bronowski type which embrace foreign rights and book tie-ins. For all the claims of poverty and shrinking schedules, there's still a great deal of money to waste in television if you know how to go about wasting it properly. No sooner does some half-meant Middle East peace treaty look like being signed, than teams from *Tonight, Nationwide* and *Gardener's World* are shouldering each other out of the way at Allenby Bridge to quiz some harmless pyjamaed Arab on his uninfluential views. And that's just current affairs. Nowadays you can't be a peaceable murderer, a quietly bent copper, a millionaire, a very unhappy person, or a beautiful native woman who doesn't wear anything above the waist, without a TV camera poking its snout into your life. It's time, perhaps, to declare everyone in the world who isn't in television – especially beautiful native women who wear nothing above the waist – members of a protected species.

I was propelled along this line of thought during *The Savage* (BBC-2), an *Omnibus* film about the life of Gauguin which was full of beautiful native women not wearing anything above the waist. There is a pointed Marc cartoon (reprinted in his essential collection, *The Times We Live In,* Cape £2.50) of Joanna Stringalong prancing naked by the Stringalong double bed and sourly demanding of her husband, 'What do you mean, Simon, you don't find it artistically essential?' In any drama-doc about Gauguin's life in Tahiti, shots of beautiful native women wearing nothing above the waist are, of course, *artistically* essential. It's just that in every other way they seem gloatingly inessential. As local beauties sported beneath the waterfall like dropleted sylphs, etc, as the writhing bodies savagely threw themselves into pagan rites, etc, all the while waving bottles of BBC booze, the thought that rose above the sound of dubbed tomtoms was simply this: isn't television the final, the most demeaning colonialist of all? First the white man comes and brings you the three awful experiences of syphilis, alcohol and the Bible; then, rather bogus artists like Gauguin come to play out their own self-involved dramas and to spread and intensify the myth about where you live; and finally the BBC comes and persuades you to act out scenes of your ancestors' spoliation.

The only difference this time round was that *The Savage,* like its subject, had a strangely bogus feel about it. The shots of the Tahitian jungle which backed the scenes of sporting local beauties reminded one of nothing so much as that black-and-white Lime Grove jungle which was so frequently used in the old days that you expected each tree to have cut on it 'Quatermass was here', or some other joshing memento from an earlier production; at first it seemed so bogus that you naturally assumed it must be real; and then it seemed so bogus that you assumed it must be just bogus. And what about the Christian names of the Tahitians; Sharon, Velma, Hugh and Marilyn were some I caught as the credits rolled. Of course, one thought, Christianity must have destroyed even their colourful island names; how touching that these dusky beauties with nothing, etc, should bear the forenames of suburbia. Then you reflected that, since the Christianity involved was French, shouldn't they all be called Marie-France and Emmanuelle and Nicole? In which case, either there is some quaint London colony of Tahitian women (just as, if you walk down Camden High Street, you can find yourself suddenly surrounded by dozens of Japanese schoolboys); or the Tahitian women were all broad-faced English actresses getting Equity rates for being artistically essential. And that seems the final television irony: to make films about foreign parts which manage both to demean the locals and to cheat them out of the foreign currency that comes when the BBC boat docks and the director shows them to the palm-leaf casting-couch.

The fauna uncovered in *Alice at the Oriental* (also BBC-2) were equally strange, and not unrelated. The English clubman at dinner – stretching his neck out, gargling down his wine, and making strange barking noises – looked remarkably similar to the king penguins giving tip-toe mating displays on *The World About Us* (still BBC-2). One defining characteristic of this species is an inability to make fine distinctions about the outside world. A 79-year-old veteran of the club, asked to define the special quality of Alice, the 90-year-old club servant who has watched the gobbling penguins since 1916, gazed in bafflement through his pince-nez, and offered, 'Well, it's a very rich quality. You don't often meet it nowadays. Well, you've seen her picture downstairs ... One day I expect it will turn up at Sotheby's as *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*' Another buffer also wrestled hard with reality: 'I think she is definitely unique. She's never changed. She's a wonderful woman.' The subject of this undifferentiated praise was indeed exceptional: 62 years of waiting on penguins, bashing a fist down like a gavel on the tea-time sandwiches, and never once dipping into the till or fiddling the drinks; a plucky, lively old lady, who still arrives an hour before everyone else at the Club. She got 18/- a week when she started, back in 1916. No one mentioned what she was earning now.

The Birds Fall Down (BBC-2 yet again) might have snared a few ecology-minded viewers by its title, which wouldn't be a bad idea; so far, it looks to be needing all the help it can get. The birds in question are woodcock, and towards the end of the first episode a bearded old Russian count, exiled (rightly, in my view) to Paris by the Czar, ponderously explained that 'systems and galaxies' also fall out of the sky in rather the same way as woodcock; not, perhaps, the week's sharpest comparison. It was hard to believe that one-fifth of Rebecca West's lengthy novel contained as little substance as this. Beauties powderpuffed themselves; a clever young girl noted how the grown-ups lied; accents slipped round in the mouth like false teeth; underlings filled in background with lines like 'As Minister of Justice you were the perfect administrator'; a rather tame gloom reigned, and the girl noted mournfully, 'When people are unhappy, they neglect the flowers.' And when viewers are unhappy with serials about Russian exiles, they take bets among themselves about who will be assassinated first.

On *Word for Word* (still more BBC-2), the Grousers' Slot claimed Frederic Raphael this time. His stirring opening defence of slang and the prefix 'mini' collapsed half way through into a ritual Grouse about the broadening of the sense of 'officer', a word which, as he pointed out, used to be connected with 'gentleman'. Nowadays there are 'local government officers' – Raphael would prefer 'servants' – and famous novelists and screenwriters get 'sinister, repugnant and condescending' letters from people called 'literature officers'. Yet isn't the thickening of the word wholly appropriate? Officers give orders; servants don't; the usage is following reality. If 'local government servants' started ordering us about, there'd be room for an even bigger Grouse about how *they* were misusing the language to betray *us*. Or does anyone believe that naming leads to making?

Not all programmes were on BBC-2 this week, though the still wonderfully fresh *Monty Python's Flying Circus* was. This worried roundup is just in case the new look for the channel which is watched by 8 per cent of the viewing force gets out of hand. From now on, it seems, BBC-2, having axed the useful *Newsday,* will be grabbing the viewer early in the evening, playing down the Open University, and filling every crack between programmes with a cartoon. And all in a drive for the figure of 10 per cent, at which point, presumably, true minority programmes can be chopped with an unspotted conscience.

The non-BBC-2 issue of the week was Dumping on Parky and The Missing Tape. Dumping on Parky has always been an honourable profession: so it was a pity that *Satur-*

Among this week's contributors:

MARGARET DRABBLE's latest novel was *The Ice Age*.

IRIS MURDOCH's more recent novels include *The Black Prince*, *A Word Child* and *The Sea, the Sea*.

A. S. BYATT teaches English at University College, London. Her previous novels are *Shadow of a Sun* and *The Game*.

ELIZABETH JANE HOWARD's most recent work of fiction was *Mr Wrong*.

ERNEST GELLNER's books include *The Devil in Modern Philosophy* and *Thought and Change*. His *Spectacles and Predicaments* is to be published next year by Cambridge.

PETER CONRAD teaches English at Christ Church, Oxford.

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day Night People (LWT) appeared to lose its bottle at the last minute. Parky had apparently been taped at a private-public dinner saying uncharitable things about some of the superstars on his show; the *Evening Standard* promised on Friday that 'now the tape is to be used by London Weekend'. Well, 'used' it just about was, in the form of a single passed-on sniderie about a female star's face-lift. Whether or not it's right to use secretly-recorded tape in this sort of case is debatable; but the worst possible course is to half-use it, as here. It left Parky (quoted replying to one of *SNP*'s researchers with 'You must be effing joking, Sunshine') looking warmly human, and the *SNP* team looking like school sneaks. Not for the first time (the David English story, the Aboriginal-Serbo-Croat novel), the show has backed off. LWT ought to know by now that such programmes are best tickled into life by the caress of danger; better to go live and haul in a few libel suits than to be judiciously softened by lawyers' cosseting. After all, a good libel suit, with all its beneficial publicity, might cost LWT no more than a lighting cameraman's return fare to Tahiti, where there are genuine non-BBC-2 native women etc.

Sport

Russell Davies

Jungle Gym

Another lot of World Gymnastics Championships, and once again I fail to thrill to the acrobats and aerobats of East and West. Why do I dislike this spectacle so much? I have been trying honestly to sort it out. Doubtless there is an element of fogeyism in my hostile indifference. Gymnastic competition at the present level of intensity is new-fangled and fashionable, and has virtually no social history at all. It does not feel a part of anything I know. This is a feeling, admittedly, that new generations will not share; for them, gymnastics will always have been there, with traditions stretching back as far as, ooh, that archaic legend Olga Korbut – the Mary Pickford of the emerging movement. The Mrs Siddons, even. Yesteryear in this game means 1977.

Then again, I dislike all sports where points are awarded at the end of performance. Competitions in which performance achieves its own numerical definition – in time, distance, goals or whatever – seem to me infinitely less anguishing to all concerned. Things are at their worst in skating, where the kitschy notion of 'artistic impression' intrudes. The numerical accolade here seems to me very nearly meaningless. Certainly it is meaningless to the onlooker, since nobody watching can tell what corrupt or puritanical notions of 'art' may be present in the judges' minds as they compute these marks. (It's almost as bad as the beauty-competition system of awarding points for 'personality and charm' – which for male judges, you can be sure, means nothing more than 'Do I still fancy her when she opens her mouth?'.)

With gymnastics, things are less obviously stained by messy ideas like 'taste'. Unless I am much mistaken, the method of marking – admitted or not – boils down to a matter of making deductions from the maximum. Since perfection in a routine is imaginable, and indeed on occasion supposedly achieved, it is a simple matter to knock off the odd fraction of a point for visible blemishes. This is a seductive plan, but of course no two routines are identical in ambition or difficulty of transition from one feat to the next. How great an adjustment should one make for a conservative routine performed with impeccable vivacity and grace? It is all deeply imponderable, and in practice results in a preposterous clustering of marks between 9.50 and 10.00. I cannot take seriously a competition where a great sprinting blur of a vault by Blokhs of the USSR earns 9.90, and is followed by one from Fortescu of Rumania that gets 9.95. What I don't believe in is the 0.05 difference – that intzy-wintzy touch more excellent excellence that Fortescu might have over Blokhs. Plainly audiences are perplexed and angered almost constantly by these notional margins: but then audiences, notoriously, judge on 'personality and charm'.

Who are these audiences, anyway? They consist increasingly, I fear, of parents. The gym thing would never have caught on as it has if it did not provide an arena in which children can excel. It has become a sport 'for all the family' not because Dad identifies with the rippling parallel-barristers of Japan but because all the family, right down to little Melanie, believes that little Melanie can become the Comaneci of the local Infant School. Now there is nothing unhealthy about this in itself. There is no reason why little girls shouldn't have muscles, and go on using them. The difficulty comes in when you consider how different the body those muscles support is one day going to be. Does the insubstantial and almost infinitely supple sprite realise that she will end up with heavy hips and athletically irrelevant breasts, and will then be expected to go on competing with a new wave of sprites?

Of course, it is a nonsense that the two types of body should be matched in the same competition (and just as nonsensical, too, in swimming: how can a Woman's title be awarded to a tot who has no womanhood to drag through the water?). And we have seen the nonsense exposed more unpleasantly than usual in recent days, during the appearance of Nadia Comaneci herself. There has been a lot of slightly pink-faced rhetoric about her 'blossoming'. There has also been cruel talk of her 'decline'. These two phenomena, needless to say, are one and the same. As Alan Weeks remarked on TV, 'she's lost that wholesome beauty' (or words to this effect): 'now let's see what she's lost in the way of control.' With this kind of thinking in the air, it is inevitable that these child-stars will grow up hating their developing bodies for causing them to fail. Miss Comaneci already has the look of one lumbered by maturity. And if, as has been rumoured, drugs have been administered to the East European champions to help delay their puberty, it is absolutely certain that nothing is being prepared, in these shockingly corrugated bodies, but a neurotic future in the style of Judy Garland. (This is to leave aside the nasty question of the political responsibility for prestige-winning that is placed upon these prematurely knotty shoulders.)

It can readily be seen, I think, that the often-quoted 'analogous case' of ballet training is nothing of the kind. Slogging away at the barre is at least an investment in future achievement, not the achievement itself. Which brings me to my most basic objection to gymnastics – at least, one which I feel to be basic, although I doubt whether it bothers many people all that much. It is this: that the sport of gymnastics is an extremely literal-minded sport. It presents control of the body as expressed in – control of the body. In ball-games, control is constantly channelled into (and frequently foiled by) the behaviour of the ball. In running, there is the psychological battle of simultaneous competition. But the gymnast's display is pure discipline. Even in its moments of apparent grace and flow, it is utterly rigid. Its wonderfully simulated exuberance is in fact a totally efficient denial of spontaneity. If there were not a danger of sounding like Bernard Levin, I would say that you could call it totalitarian poetry in motion. A starched circus.

That's why I would encourage any child of mine who insisted on tumbling to join the circus proper, spangles and all. Then at least when the child raised its arms in that triumphant fanfaring gesture, I'd be able to interpret it as an honest begging for applause, and not a pseudo-balletic hypocrisy sneaked in as it is in the floor exercises. Better still, I would

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encourage the babe to lend his 'spatial awarness' to that splendid Swedish comic troupe that passed through London a few years ago – I forget the name. If it wasn't The Loonies, it should have been. They presented an untiring stream of costumed aspirants pouring catastrophically over a vaulting horse, most of them landing flat on their faces – but really flat, bang, without moving an inch, not even to bounce. It was the funniest wordless comedy I have seen since Buster Keaton. I gave them 10.00 for technique; and a large bonus for humanity.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Anybody's

Molly *Comedy*
King Lear *Old Vic*
Deathtrap *Garrick*

Alma Rattenbury, whose power to charm was notorious, seems to be posthumously bagging one playwright's scalp after another's. First it was Terence Rattigan, whose *Cause Célèbre* concentrated on her trial and the scandal it brought the brutally genteel Bournemouth of the mid-Thirties; and now Simon Gray, whose main interest is the convoluted attachments that led to murder. The tragic flaw of Molly, as he rechristens Alma, is her belief that she can please everyone simultaneously: her elderly and probably impotent husband, Teddy, whose weakness for spanking her she gamely tolerates; the young gardener-chauffeur who eventually kills him in a frenzy of sexual envy; her mutedly lesbian companion-housekeeper, Eve, predictably outraged by the liaison between her employer and this shambling lout; and, not least, her own bored and frustrated self. 'One never does know how to turn people down,' shrugs Molly, only to discover that her generosity has crammed the domestic test-tube with fatally unstable chemicals. Their interaction is bound to produce explosions.

All right: 'tragic flaw' is perhaps a rather heady claim. Nevertheless, the play has more substance and certainly more subtlety than some of my fellow-hacks seem ready to recognise. Gray's point, if I understand it, is that the emotional and sexual roles foisted on people by tradition and convention are absurdly stark, given the complexities they've acquired from nature and nurture. Molly, like many women before and after her, has married a man much older than herself. To her he's primarily a querulous but lovable father, secondly a clamorous, pettish child, and, thirdly and far less relevantly, her lawful husband: and why not? Again, she's as much mother as mistress to grotty, repressed Oliver, who is 20 years younger than herself – and, once more, why not? In Gray's view most relationships are quirkier, and we bring more unexpected aspects of ourselves to them, than either custom or language allows; and it is sheer bigotry to dub such irregularities 'disgusting', as jealous Eve does in the play. 'We're all disgusting,' replies Molly: which, if true, is as much as to say that no one is disgusting. It is the word 'disgusting' that is naïve, and needs redefining or rejecting.

Actually, this is a conclusion markedly similar to that of Rattigan, whose best work may be seen as a running campaign in defence of those victimised by the world for their unruly emotions. But it is Mr Gray's version of the Rattenbury myth that repays the more careful examination. Notice, as a tiny example, how the newly-hired Oliver persistently calls Molly 'miss', though she is married, and Eve 'missus', though she isn't. Or observe the way Molly describes the boy when he's frantically denying snitching her fags. He is, she says, 'honking' like a goose, a word that recurs again and again after she has seduced him and he is waiting in jittery expectation of her in the car outside. He honks and honks and honks, and the repetition makes a good metaphor for that callow but unstoppable sexuality, that farmyard hunger of his. But then the play is full of suggestive symbolism: a vision of seal pups being flayed alive, another of a wounded rabbit strung up by its legs and left to be worried to death by dogs. It has a resonance that makes Rattigan's timbre sound just a little woolly.

Stephen Hollis's production may trickle past a bit dreamily in the first half: the tension of the encounters increases considerably in the second, up to and including the moment when T. P. McKenna's Teddy, having raged and railed fairly definitively at the misery of being old, deaf, smelly and boring, spits in the eye of Anthony Allen's whey-faced Oliver and gets skewered with the garden shears. At this point Molly's urgent wish is to fetch medical help and somehow revive the corpse, a reaction that Billie Whitelaw makes perfectly natural and logical. From the very first, when she's slouched onstage and sprawled like a rag-doll across the sofa, she's shown us the nervy desperation beneath her easy-come, easy-go charm; but an essential kindliness, a capacity for affection and a sense of emotional responsibility, has held steady throughout. It is a well-judged performance, matched in quality only by Barbara Atkinson's old-maidish Eve, with her permanently ruffled feathers and tightly-shut beak. Here's an actress, hitherto unknown to me, who can simply sit and knit, and suggest in the click of the needles anger, repulsion, frustrated love and a cutting grief, an awful glandular muddle in someone who has never learnt to express feeling or even admit its existence. Let's hope she succeeds in imprinting her image on the nation's casting directors.

We last saw Anthony Quayle in *The Rivals*, a mottled Sir Anthony Absolute pugnaciously relegating his child to outer darkness at the slightest sign of demur. It is not a vast step from this to Lear, or at least to part of Lear; and Mr Quayle, white whiskers drooping down his lobster-face, is indeed very much the fond but tyrannical father, reduced to hurrumphing, twitching, gobbling senility by the stony hearts of those he has made his life. The performance no doubt misses much, for instance a metaphysical anguish, whatever that may be; but it is packed with nagging, impotent pain of a more domestic variety, the sort most of us should be able to understand and share. And the production as a whole? Well, Toby Robertson, whose recent *Twelfth Night* was blamed for its unorthodoxy, must be a puzzled man, because the accusation against his *Lear* seems to be that it is orthodox in everything except its erratically-conceived costumes, which put the protagonist into a grubby pink dressing-gown, Christopher Neame's near-naked Edmund into Genghis-Khan fur, and the ugly sisters into Ascot hats. In fact, it seems to me sensible and acute: if less than mountainous, much more than the series of uppity molehills many modern directors manage to make of the play.

Life is clearly more precarious than we'd realised for those toiling in the theatrical vineyard. Last week critics topped the murder list; this, playwrights; next, perhaps electricians or usherettes. Ira Levin's *Deathtrap* has more sudden and dramatic surprises than *Who Killed 'Agatha' Christie*, but it is no more credible and no more ingenious than that under-rated piece – and those who know *Les Diaboliques* may leave with some sense of *déjà vu*. Denis Quilley, plummy-voiced and smooth as a plucked capon, plays a dramatist the giddy pinnacle of whose ambitions is to be recognised by hoi polloi in Sardi's. It takes all sorts.

Films

John Coleman

Idylls of the King

Summer Paradise (AA) *Paris Pullman* and *Phoenix*
Stevie (AA) *Classic, Oxford Street;*
Hooper (A) *Warner 2; Classic, Oxford Street; Scene; ABCs Edgware and Fulham Roads*

Gunnel Lindblom, that feral beauty with the wolf's smile, is not just another fine Bergman actress: she has also directed for the theatre. But *Summer Paradise*, which she wrote with Ulla Isaksson from the latter's novel, is the first time she has controlled events from behind the camera. It came about, she explains, because 'a group of actor friends said they wanted to produce a film themselves and asked me to direct it'; and a sense of ensemble playing is the most immediate asset of this impressive debut. Four generations of a Swedish family are traditionally gathered for the holidays in a sprawling house on the archipelago, tended during the year by the aged parents, irascible father and patient mother. It's their successful doctor daughter, though, Katha (played with a high, no-nonsense complacency by the soft-faced Birgitta Valberg), who's the driving force behind the annual assembly and it's she who decides this year will be different: no Ingrid and King to disrupt things. We are let into a ravishingly photographed midsummer world – or 'hollow idyll', as a bristling husband prefers to see it – like invisible guests, getting our bearings on the large, ramshackle family and their emotional tangles as best we may. If this is paradise, it is an ironic one, with too many Eves. Katha's two daughters are there: Sassa (rangy,

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dazzling, *modern* Agneta Ekmanner) with a gentle young lover, nicknamed Puss or 'kiss', she has just picked up and her own adolescent daughter, Eva, a latch-key child; and Annika, more mother-earthy, with two little kids and a roving-reporter man, Ture, who unexpectedly turns up, to make that crack about their idyll and supplementary bad-taste observations.

Other important visitors are Emma (Sif Rud), a manic-depressive social worker and Katha's bickering friend for 35 years, who arrives as usual and not too symbolically in a blinding downpour; Tomas, a reserved youth and Katha's nephew, whose parents dump him before making for the Riviera; and, ultimately, those thorns in the flesh, lost, sullen Ingrid with a butch fringe and her fatherless, mentally disturbed son, King – these last are not family but life-force Sassa's protégés, and *her* Eva has a painful crush on wild King, who spends time in a tree-house relaying murderous messages to spaceships. There are confrontations all along the line: Ingrid is jealous of Puss's monopoly of Sassa; Annika and her womanising yet weak Ture wrangle and make love; the bullying old paterfamilias fears death at night; King, against himself, rejects Eva's friendship. But the major battle is between Katha and Emma. This Emma is a stunning, disturbing creation, now comical, now grim, turning up drenched through on a crest of hilarity, gradually souring, to the point where she delivers a gritted attack on today's irresponsible women who smoke during pregnancies and go back to their professional lives as soon as their babies are born.

And the film itself extends and amplifies her bitterness. The Tomas I have barely mentioned is as elusively glimpsed on screen (sorting out 'the pangs of adolescence', suggests Katha easily), but his suicide is to have the household packing up and leaving for his funeral, with only King – squatting like an autistic Mexican outside – left behind. Ms Lindblom and her co-writer are open to charges both of loading their argument (so many absentee or feeble men, such feckless or blinkered women) and of glibly endowing the old-too-soon kids with hinted social consciences (Eva's bad dream of herself and King in Vietnam, Tomas in lonely vigil before TV pictures of soldiers prowling streets). It is a major flaw, something borrowed maybe from the Bergman, who here produced, of *Persona* and elsewhere. But impatience should not blind one to the many positive virtues of this portrait of a torn society in miniature. It is acted – more precisely, *interacted* – with incredible distinction.

'All aboard for a trip to the suburbs,' says Trevor Howard as The Man, wandering in and out of *Stevie*, a chorus all forlorn for most of the time, and never more a nuisance than when he looks out on a lake and delivers 'Not Waving but Drowning'. I was longing to hear what the redoubtable Glenda Jackson made of that most famous of Stevie Smith's poems, the stumbling-block 'To be or not to be . . .' of her oeuvre. She certainly knows how to handle the lines, both those of Hugh Whitemore, who wrote the play and now this film version, and of their subject, the strange Miss Smith in whose verses strains of William Blake and Edward Lear so cordially yet spikily cohabit. Robert Enders, an American writer and producer one could wish would leave our English ladies alone (he exercised the two functions on Muriel Spark's *The Abbess of Crewe*, which became *Nasty Habits*, alas), now turns his talents to direction and by and large succeeds in making me deeply regret having missed the stage occasion last year.

It is not so much the address direct to audience that perturbs, though this is a convention scarcely suited to cinema (only Frankie Howerd has really swung it so far): it is The Man, of course, as well as excellent Alec McCowen briefly present as the suburban lover with a tennis racquet – on stage, Peter Eyre was all the males, I believe – and it is particularly the 'opening-out' efforts: switches from sepia; shots of a solitary child at a window; the vulgarity of a couple of swoops down a railway tunnel, the second heavily intimating death. All that is good in *Stevie* – Miss Jackson's marvellous modulations from verse to prose, the acidulated anecdotes and asides, the genuinely touching love between Stevie and her philistine Lion-Aunt (surely one of the best things Mona Washbourne has done in a lifetime of super cameos and more) – is quite enough to warrant a visit to the film. How much nicer, one suspects, might have been a straight camera recording of one night at the Vaudeville.

Hal Needham's *Hooper* is a muscle-bound, inside-Hollywood equivalent of *The Gunfighter* and such. Burt Reynolds is the ace movie stuntman with young Jan-Michael Vincent as the ambitious kid on his tail. Only, this is a resolutely upbeat affair and they are soon buddies, poised to do the Big One – a rocket-car leap of 325 feet across a gorge to the sound of the 'Bond' theme – in the grand finale. A little fun is had with the ego-mad director: 'I want it. It's the ending I want. It's the statement I want to make.' Unfortunately, other statements are made. 'He's thinking, Gwennie, he's got a lot of things on his mind,' explains a buddy to Burt's girl friend as Burt knits his brows at a distance. And the girl friend herself (Sally Field) is no slouch when it comes to knitting a cliché. She actually says, without blushing, as her man goes off to maybe die, 'I Won't Be Here When You Get Back.' But she is. To compound this felony, my synopsis failed to credit the real stuntmen who are its only conceivable stars. Burt has the nerve to do a thumbs-up direct to camera at the close. A two-digit response seemed in order.

Jazz

Charles Fox

Work Ethic

The Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Seventies by LEONARD FEATHER and IRA GITLER *Quartet* £7.50

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz by BRIAN CASE and STAN BRITT *Salamander Books* £6.95

Duke Ellington in Person: An Intimate Memoir by MERCER ELLINGTON with STANLEY DANCE *Hutchinson* £5.95

Those who can do, those who can't catalogue. That more or less summed up the European reaction to jazz in the 1930s, a period when local musicians were thin on the ground, still learning their craft, yet fans were simmering with enthusiasm. It resulted in the birth of jazz scholarship; not just Hugues Panassié sorting out the aesthetics in *Hot Jazz* (1934) but Hilton R. Schleman in London listing the line-ups of jazz and dance bands in *Rhythm On Record* (1936), to be overtaken almost immediately by Charles Delaunay's *Hot Discography*, full of dates and matrix numbers as well as details of who played with whom. Since then most discographers and encyclopedists have been Europeans. Only one American, Ira Gitler, is involved in the two encyclopedias under review, and he arrived with the current volume (the original *Encyclopedia of Jazz* and an earlier supplement, *Jazz In the Sixties*, are also available from Quartet Books). Feather himself, just like Stanley Dance, Mercer Ellington's collaborator, lived and worked in Britain before going off to live in the US.

Not since Aldous Huxley used the eleventh edition of the Britannica as a bunkside book on a trip round the world can many people have sat down to read an encyclopedia from A to Z. Usefulness, not style, is what one looks for. And these two volumes are useful in different ways. Feather's is aimed at jazz buffs needing information about musicians who have surfaced during the past decade. Earlier heroes get their later exploits filled in, or, more sadly, their deaths recorded (and beware those American-style dates, illogically putting month, day and year in that order). Statistics, of course, are for people who have trouble reading. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice how many non-Americans have edged their way in: 280 this time out of an estimated 1,400. Britain leads the way with 57, followed by Canada (24) and Japan (22). Iron Curtain countries notch up 41 between them, Poland and Czechoslovakia tying for top place with 12 apiece (they include a surprising number of bassists, at least two of whom – Miroslav Vitous and George Mraz – went on to work in American bands). Africa would have done better had Feather not left out such brilliant South Africans as Johnny Dyanni, Louis Moholo and Dudu Pukwana.

Brian Case and Stan Britt really cater for the fan on the Clapham omnibus, outlining the careers of leading musicians from the earliest times right up to the present. Gil Evans recently remarked that Louis Armstrong once told him how Miles Davis sounded just like Buddy Bolden. Bolden, as it happens, is not included, nor are those other half-mythical figures – Emmett Hardy, Peck Kelly – whose reputations are not backed up by records. Other omissions seem less understandable, particularly that of Pinetop Smith, who, half a century ago, added 'boogie-woogie' to the English language before being shot dead in a dance hall three months later.

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(One encouraging statistic, incidentally, is the decline in the murder-rate among jazz and blues players; the only incident listed by Feather is the shooting – by his common-law wife – of the trumpeter Lee Morgan in 1972.) There are musicians, too, who deserved fuller coverage, among them – just for starters – Dave Tough, Connee Boswell, Leo Watson ('the most gymnastic of scat-singers') and the highly original Dick Twardzik.

Books of this sort get hit badly by the publisher's time-lag. Case and Britt, for example, supply a perceptive study of George Lewis, the New Orleans clarinettist, but stay dumb about the trombonist of the same name, a new arrival yet already an important soloist. Still, they try to cover all styles, putting in Derek Bailey and Evan Parker, our two champion avant-gardists, as well as Bird and Prez and 'Fatha' Hines (a photo of Hines, complete with shades and toupée, is one of many by Valerie Wilmer, unequalled at capturing the ethos of a musician). On the whole the book reflects prevailing critical opinions, so there is proper rehabilitation of the once-fashionable white New Yorkers – Adrian Rollini, Miff Mole, Joe Venuti – over-praised in the 1930s, unjustly neglected after that. But the need for brevity rules out digression. Feather, on the other hand, works in a few bitchy quotes (Elvin Jones on Ginger Baker: 'They should make him an astronaut and lose his ass'), including a reprint of a Blindfold Test with Miles Davis ('He's like a white Uncle Tom', Davis says of the trumpeter Al Hirt, and, commenting on the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band, 'It makes me feel like I'm broke and wearing a slip that doesn't belong to me, and my hair's combed the wrong way round').

But the raw material for jazz historians will always be anecdotes and reminiscences, the kind of thing to be found in Mercer Ellington's memoir of his father (relations between them were often edgy, for Duke was scarcely the conventional paterfamilias). The work must always be what really matters, yet foibles remain fascinating, even Ellington's superstitions (he refused to buy socks or shoes for anyone because this meant they would walk away from him; similarly, brown was unlucky because he was wearing a brown suit on the day his mother died). Good quotes abound, whether Duke is describing the Queen and Prince Philip ('Two young people trying to get along') or Mercer is observing how the drummer, Sam Woodyard, 'once had DTs so bad that he couldn't sign his IOUs'.

A concert almost every night of the week for 50 weeks a year, with nobody thinking it unusual to be performing in Brussels one evening and in Addis Ababa the next. A band in which a few musicians thought they lost face by turning up on time; where a star soloist – the likeable but vulnerable Paul Gonsalves – could collapse on-stage or simply fail to show. Viewed from outside the life seems unendurable. Yet Ellington kept the band going (often subsidising it out of the royalties from his songs), even touring through Europe and Africa (including a Royal Command Performance) during that final winter, when he was fighting off cancer. In earlier years he had composed on railway trains, between shows in a cinema pit, anywhere he happened to be. And he kept writing even on his death-bed. Those of us reared on the work-ethic have to admire the doggedness as well as the genius.

Music

Andrew Clements

Profit Motif

BBC Symphony Orchestra *Festival Hall/Radio 3*
Maurizio Pollini *Festival Hall/Radio 3*

With few obsequies, Pierre Boulez gave up the post of Chief Conductor to the BBCSO in 1975. The pioneering spirit that had characterised his work with the orchestra in the late Sixties had long since disappeared; the strain of controlling both the BBCSO and the New York Philharmonic was obvious. Yet Boulez's departure did not bring the expected change in the orchestra's fortunes. His successor, Rudolf Kempe, died before he could make any significant impression on policy or playing standards, and there followed almost three years of barrenness; performances became increasingly shoddy and lack-lustre. Gennadi Rozhdestvensky's appointment, which took effect in September, has apparently been seen as some kind of salvation, restoring the morale of both players and audiences. The BBC worked hard to secure him; his charisma and reputation as an orchestral trainer seem to have mattered far more than the absolute quality of his interpretations or the exact extent of his musical sympathies.

Certainly the contrast between the cool, uncommunicative Boulez and Rozhdestvensky could hardly be more acute. On the platform he exudes *bonhomie*, infecting orchestra and audience with his enthusiasm. On the evidence of his first two Festival Hall concerts, the formula works. Attendances were better than for most BBC concerts in the past few seasons and the orchestra responded with some of the most spirited playing I've heard from them. Less convincing is Rozhdestvensky's repertoire. As I pointed out in connection with this year's Proms, the BBCSO *is* different from the other London orchestras in that it's not obliged to make a profit on its public concerts and its rehearsal time is flexible; no other orchestra can mount performance of works that demand extraordinary resources and exceptional preparation. This accorded well with Boulez's objectives and, before he tired of conducting, the combination was the most vital force in British musical life. Yet the programmes for Rozhdestvensky's first season show little awareness of this responsibility. Admittedly the first two concerts each contained a novelty, but I could happily never hear either of them again. Prokofiev's banal *Ode to the End of the War* would be entirely unremarkable did it not include eight harps and four pianos in its orchestration; Schreker's *The Birthday of the Infanta* was an inappropriate centenary tribute to a composer whose best work is much more individual.

In both concerts the most interesting performances were those of the most familiar works. Elgar's second Symphony began as though Rozhdestvensky was intent on stripping away the veneer of tradition that often smothers Elgar interpretation in this country: the opening syncopated B flats were so clearly articulated that the pulse of the movement was immediately apparent, instead of being smoothed into a single note without any sense of momentum. The performance was full of incidental insights like that, yet often they were achieved at the expense of architectural coherence. Only the second movement held together, the details for once contributing to its cumulative effect. In the second concert *Petrushka* quite restored one's faith after the Schreker and an extraordinary performance of Scriabin's Piano Concerto with Victoria Postnikova (Tozhdestvensky's wife) as soloist, in which much of the solo part was inaudible and what did emerge was spoilt by heavy, self-conscious rubato. Rozhdestvensky's ideal of orchestral balance was exactly right for the Stravinsky. He makes little attempt to homogenise textures – the lines remain distinct and rough-edged with dynamic contrasts seemingly deliberately exaggerated: the rhythms are bitingly articulated. It may not have been the sort of performance one wants to hear too often but it was exciting.

In terms of box office and orchestral playing, then, Rozhdestvensky has already proved that he can deliver the goods. If he can restore the BBCSO to a position of eminence among British orchestras perhaps he will have justified his appointment, and crusading can be left to others. It's good news that the BBC has invited Michael Gielen to be a Chief Guest Conductor, since he has a distinguished record of commitment to new and neglected music. The two conductors might well eventually complement each other.

Maurizio Pollini's recital devoted to the last three Schubert piano sonatas compels at least a brief notice through the sheer quality of its pianism. Pollini is not, I think, the ideal Schubert interpreter; he lacks a response to the simple, elemental passion that suffuses much of Schubert's piano writing. He mistrusts the straightforward dramatics of the opening of the C minor Sonata or the torrent of energy that begins the A major and is much more at home with the complex, intellectually generated excitement of a work like the *Hammerklavier*. Yet at moments of more Apollonian inspiration in the Schubert sonatas he is peerless. The slow movement of the B flat Sonata was extraordinarily refined and paced, the finale of the A major exquisitely shaded and articulated. No other pianist now before the public consistently produces such a standard of excellence.

Weekend Competition

No 2539 **Set by Anne Rundle**

Write a 13-line poem in which the first line begins with A and ends with Z, the second with B and ends with Y, and so on in order. In octosyllabic couplets, please.

Result of No 2536 **Set by Pierre Fils**

We asked for examples of advertisements in newsagents' windows which seem to tell a story, like: 'For Sale: One skate-board and a pair of crutches.'

Report **by Al Fresco**

Despite a charming hand-drawn entry from

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Milton Kleynes (not the subtlest pseudonym we've come across, Milt), this was a disappointing comp. Some of you imagined that you only had to think up silly things for sale; we puzzled over a few of these – why should anyone want to exchange a hand-reared baby crocodile for a reverse thread corkscrew? – fretting briefly in case you were being too clever for us. But no danger of *that*, as we quickly realised. So an extraordinarily generous Newton for each winner; but you'd better pull your socks up if you want any chance of splashing your way through the free grog which we might (or, on the other hand, might not) be offering as a bonus prize in late November. Watch this space.

For Sale: Cottage on quaint corner, I.O.M.; assorted motor-cycle spares.
Wanted (cash waiting): Holiday kennels as going concern; centrally situated oriental restaurant.
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For Sale: Half rhinoceros's horn and collection of etchings *circa* 1930. FRANK ANDERSON

For Sale: Hammer, cement mixer, wardrobe of ladies' clothes. T. GRIFFITHS

For Sale: Black leather jacket; Writers' and Artists' Yearbook (as new). ROY KELLY

For Sale: Seven wax effigies of Russell Harty, two part-melted, others used apparently as spin-cushions; a three-year run of the *Radio Times* (much chewed); a bellows and a clapped out B&W TV set (c. 1952) with poker-work inscription on imitation-walnut veneer – 'Ingrams was here'.
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Four Sail: Teech Yoreself Inglish £1; Teech Yoreself Arithmetik £1; Or the Too For £2.50.
J. TIMSON

For Sale: *Which?* INcome Tax Guide (good condition); maps of Bahamas and Jamaica (unused).
TED THOMPSON

For Sale: Typewriter, rhyming dictionary, signed photo of Martin Fagg, obscene letter from Gerry Hamill, indecipherable postcard from Tim Hopkins. Offers? Or would exchange for fretwork set.
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HARRISON EVERARD

Gentleman will exchange sailing gear, grand piano, conductor's baton, for witchcraft manual and modelling wax. MAUD GRACECHURCH

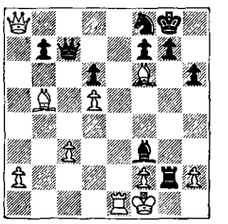
Tony Miles

Chess

No 107 **Karpov/Korchnoy**

Looking back on the world championship match there was one game which seemed to typify the particular qualities that Korchnoy brings to his chess. The game was the 29th and in it Korchnoy displayed all his dogged persistence.

White: V. Korchnoy **Black: A. Karpov**
1.P-QB4, N-KB3; 2.N-QB3, P-K3; 3.P-K4, P-B4; 4.P-K5,N-N1; 5.P-Q4, 5.N-B3 is out of fashion. **5...PxP; 6.QxP, N-QB3; 7.Q-K4, P-Q3; 8.N-B3, PxP; 9.NxP, N-B3; 10.NxN, Q-N3; 11.Q-B3, PxN; 12.B-K2, B-N2; 13.0-0, P-B4; 14.Q-R3, B-K2; 15.B-B3.** White has an edge thanks to Black's split Q-side pawns, and the exchange of W-squared bishops, leaving the black KB slightly bad, increases it. **15...0-0; 16.P-QN3, KR-Q1; 17.B-K3, B-B3; 18.N-R4, Q-B2; 19.BxB, QxB; 20.QR-Q1, QR-B1; 21.Q-N3, B-Q3; 22.Q-R4, B-K2; 23.P-B3, K-B1; 24.Q-B2, RxR; 25.RxR, Q-B2; 26.Q-N3, QxQ.** I suspect that it is better for Black to avoid the exchange of queens. **27.PxQ, P-KR4; 28.K-B2, K-K1; 29.K-K2, P-N3; 30.N-B3, P-R3; 31.N-R4, R-B3; 32.R-KR1, B-Q3; 33.B-B2, N-Q2(?).** A strange move. After, say, K-Q2 or B-K2 I doubt if White could make much progress. Presumably Karpov underestimated Korchnoy's next. **34.P-KN4, PxP; 35.R-R8ch, K-K2; 36.PxP, P-N4.** 36...P-B4 is positionally the more desirable advance, and in the absence of a tactical refutation should be preferred, but the text is typical of Karpov – he doesn't believe in bad bishops. **37.B-K3, P-B3; 38.N-B3, K-B2; 39.R-R7ch, K-K1: 40. N-K4, B-K2;** The adjourned position. White has a definite advantage – all his pieces are actively placed and he has pressure against both BP's – but it should not be enough. **41.R-R6, K-B2; 42.R-R7ch, K-B1; 43.R-R8ch, K-B2; 44.B-Q2, N-B1;** Sensibly preparing to evict the rook, else B-B3 and R-QR8 would be most unpleasant. **45.R-R1, K-N3; 46.R-Q1, P-B4??** This may well be the decisive mistake. Black weakens his KNP, the e5 square and (after a possible exchange on f5) the d5 square. If Black instead just sits on the position with, say, R-B1-B3 I do not think White can win. **47.N-B2, B-Q3;** if B-B3, 48.B-K3 followed by N-Q3. Possibly the best try is 47...N-R2 intending...N-B3. **48.B-B3, N-Q2; 49.PxPch, PxP; 50.P-KN4, N-N3.** A horrible move to have to play, but how else can he prevent R-Q5? On...N-B3; 51.PxPch, KxP; 52.BxN, KxB; 53.N-K4ch picks up a pawn with a probable win thanks to the weak BP, whilst...B-K4; 51.RxN, BxB; 52.PxPch is similarly unpleasant. **51.K-B3, B-K2; 52.B-R5, R-B3; 53.K-N2, PxP; 54.NxP, R-K3; 55.K-B3, B-B3; 56.NxB(!)** A good decision. Black's weak Ps and horrible N are quite enough to decide the game. **56...RxNch; 57.K-N4, N-B1; 58.B-Q8, R-B5ch;** On R-Q3; 59.RxR, NxR; 60.BxP wins. **59.K-N3, R-B4; 60.P-R4, K-B2; 61.R-Q3, R-K4; 62.K-N4, K-N3; 63.P-R5, R-K5ch; 64.K-B3, R-B5ch; 65.K-K3, R-R5; 66.R-Q5, R-R6ch; 67.K-Q2, RxP; 68.RxP, R-N1; 69.R-B6ch, K-B4; 70.RxP, P-N5; 71.R-B6ch; K-K5; 72.B-B7, R-N7ch; 73.K-B3, R-N2; 74.B-R2, R-KR2; 75.B-N8, R-QN2; 76.B-N3, R-N8; 77.R-B4ch, K-K6; 78.R-B8, N-K2; 79.P-R6 Resigns.** On N-B3 or R-R8; 80.P-R7 and B-B2ch.



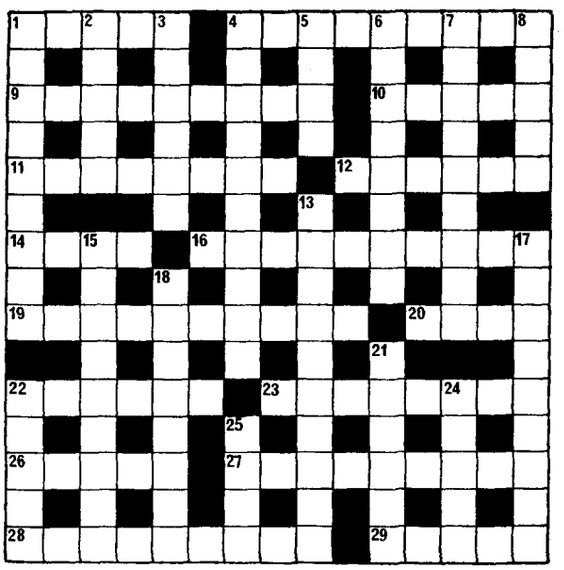
Problem 107

Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 15 November.

Solution to Problem 105
1.NxN, QPxN; 2.B-B4ch, K-N2; 3.N-B7! and there is no good defence to Q-R6ch. The game concluded...K-R2; 4.QxBP, B-N2; 5.N-N5ch, K-R1; 6.Q-K6 Resigns.

Weekend Crossword 1281

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1281, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 14 November.



ACROSS

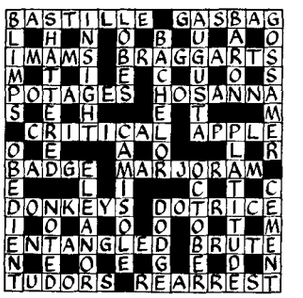
1. 'Man's hand is not able to ——' (*MND*) (5).
4. Expedients used to cure sores (9).
9. In case mouth is something seen on face (9).
10. Soccer ground where team carries ball back (5).
11. Giving a member a roll, he observes the letter (8).
12. Composer who spends half his life in God's embrace (6).
14. Instrument for returning an objection (4).
16. Climbing equipment to be found in stolen pack (10).
19. What tourists may take to make teams bat so badly (10).
20. Tried the material (4).
22. Uneven and nearly all caught in the way (6).
23. Her pig is turned into a musician (8).
26. Lively and back in most relaxed mood (5).
27. Fish finds something to chew in an island (9).
28. In haste came to Tony's place (4, 5).
29. Vegetable for a foreigner (5).

DOWN

1. Patterns which provide one with ample test (9).
2. Discharged for taking a breather after a second? (5).
3. Makes much of and lets love and kiss freely (6).
4. Fish is what the potential moron lacks (4, 6).
5. Stop the race (4).
6. Possibly Eve ruins everything (8).
7. Animal tears Veronica right to pieces (9).
8. Notices about ten but one of these is male (5).
13. Instrument for the captain to beat (10).
15. Rests for the living (9).
17. Bird which keeps watch beside the pool, we hear (9).
18. Prepare me a pitch to be stressed (8).
21. Waters lots of flowers (6).
22. Talk foolishly although right in the head (5).
24. Kind of picture in view as something fine (5).
25. Competent man about fifty (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1280



Prizewinners to No 1280

Bronwen Harris (Bedford)
Ben Noble (London NW3)
Kate Gilbert (Hoddesdon)

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Application forms can be obtained from:

**The Administrative and Personnel Officer,
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Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA.
Tel: 01-834 9434.**

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 96 No. 2485

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Exhibition

GANYMED GALLERY, 11 Gt Turnstile WC1. 405 9836. Original lithographs and etchings by Moore, Arthur Boyd, Whiteley, Lowry, also 18 & 19 C satirical prints.

Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company). 836 6404. Info 836 5332. Middleton & Rowley's 'The Changeling' in repertoire with David Mercer's 'Cousin Vladimir', Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' and 'Coriolanus'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse in premiere Mary O'Malley's 'Look Out . . . Here Comes Trouble', Peter Flannery's 'Savage Amusement', Pete Atkins 'A & R' and Stephen Poliakoff's 'Shout Across the River'.

NATIONAL THEATRE 928 2252. 'Macbeth', 'The Cherry Orchard', 'Plenty', 'The World Turned Upside Down' (perhaps not suitable for children). See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

ROYAL COURT 730 1745. 'Prayer for my Daughter' by Thomas Babe. Prevs from 13 Nov. Last perf 'Inadmissible Evidence' 4 Nov 5 & 8.30.

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Meetings

AUGUSTE ANGLES, Professeur de littérature française at the Sorbonne, will give a lecture on 'La nouvelle revue française et les écrivains anglo-saxons' on Tuesday, 7 November at 6.15 p.m. at the French Institute, Queensberry Place, London SW7. Tel. 589 6211 ext. 38. Admission free.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The 1978 Creighton Lecture will be given by Professor Joel Hurstfield (Astor Professor of English History, University College, London), entitled: 'The Illusion of Power in Tudor England' at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, 6 November 1978 at the University of London, Senate House (Beveridge Hall), Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Adm. free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St. WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. 7 Nov. 'Magic and Mathematics at the Court of Rudolph II' by Dr C. B. Thomas; 9 Nov. 'Talmudic References to Jesus of Nazareth' by Dr M. J. Geller.

KEYNES SEMINAR: University of Kent. Friday 17 Nov. 1978, 2 p.m. Derek Crabtree, Richard Shone, Prof. Raymond Williams and Prof. Quentin Bell discuss Keynes and the Bloomsbury Group. Admission free. Details from the Master's Secretary, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury.

1ST w/e ea. mth Wisdom Teachings 1925-2025 in lovely Wye Valley at Medhope Tintern (029-18 253).

ADLERIAN SOCIETY. Gestalt Therapeutic Techniques (talk with practical application exercises). Dr Bert Falkowski. Tuesday 7 Nov., 7.30 p.m., Mary Sumner Hall, 24 Tufton St, SW1. Visitors welcome 50p (students 25p).

FOCUS GROUP. Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, London, WC2. Monday, 6 November, 6.30 p.m. A talk by the Hon. Gerald Regan, leader of the Opposition, Nova Scotia, entitled: 'The Present Political Scene in Canada'. Admission 30p to non RCS members.

'FRAGMENTS OF TRUTH in Stories and Symbols'. A talk by Miss Ianthe Hoskins. Sun. 5 Nov. 7 p.m. The Theosophical Society in England, 50 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3HJ. Tel. 01-935 9261.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, 23 Norfolk Sq., W2. Sun. 5 Nov. Swami Bhavyananda 'Questions and Answers' at 5 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 50p.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sun. 5 Nov. 8 p.m. 'The Path to the Masters'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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